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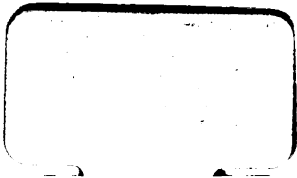
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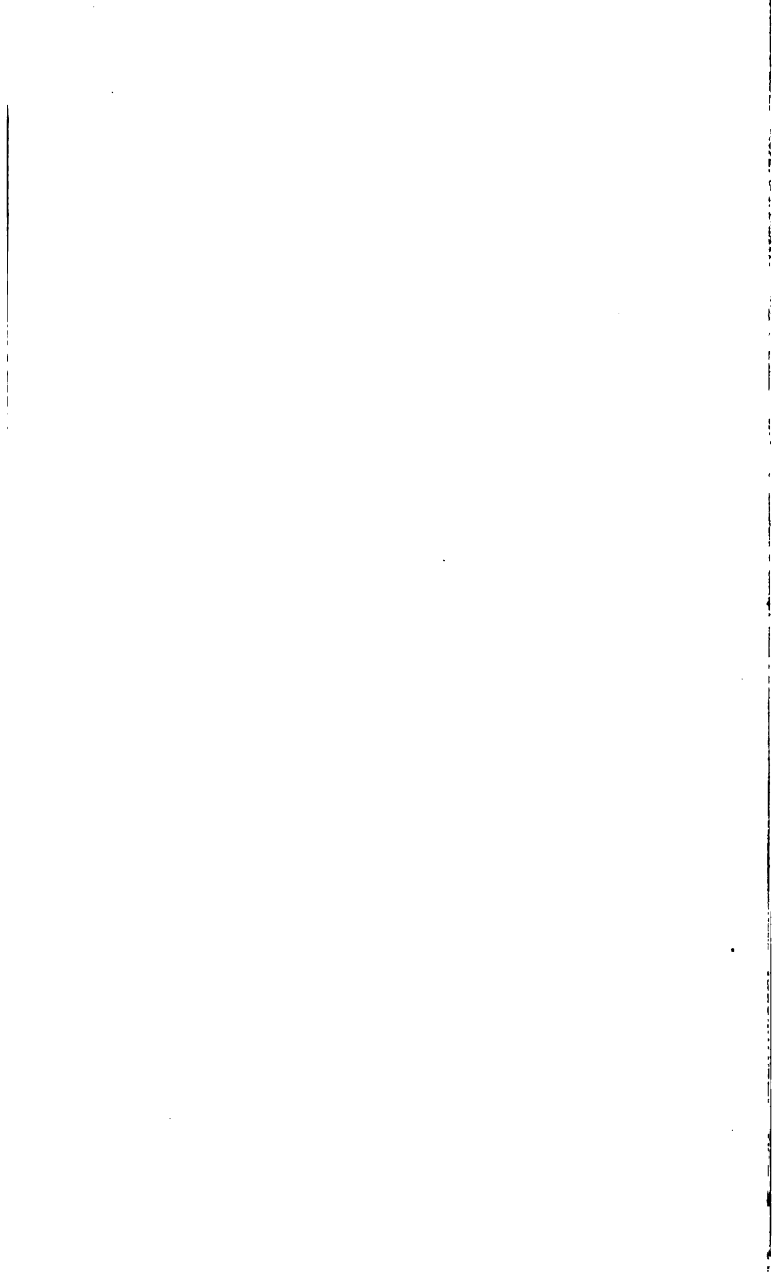
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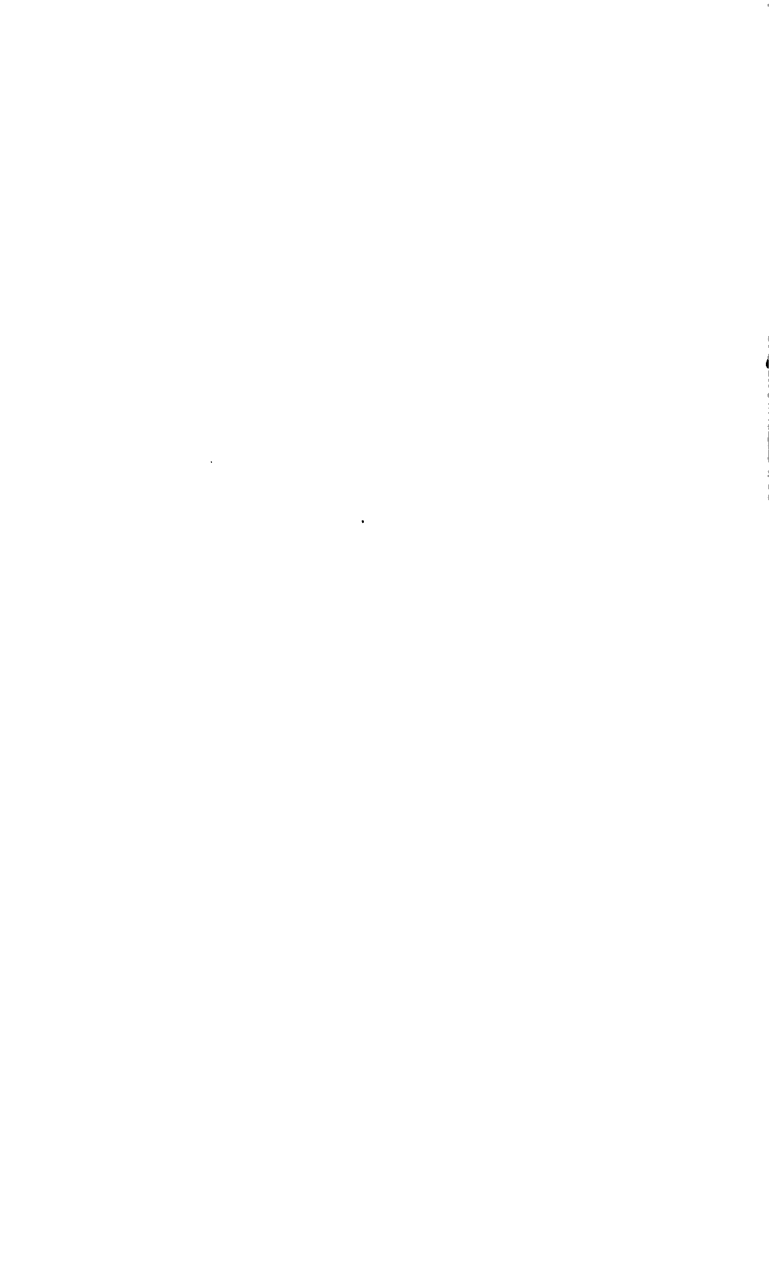


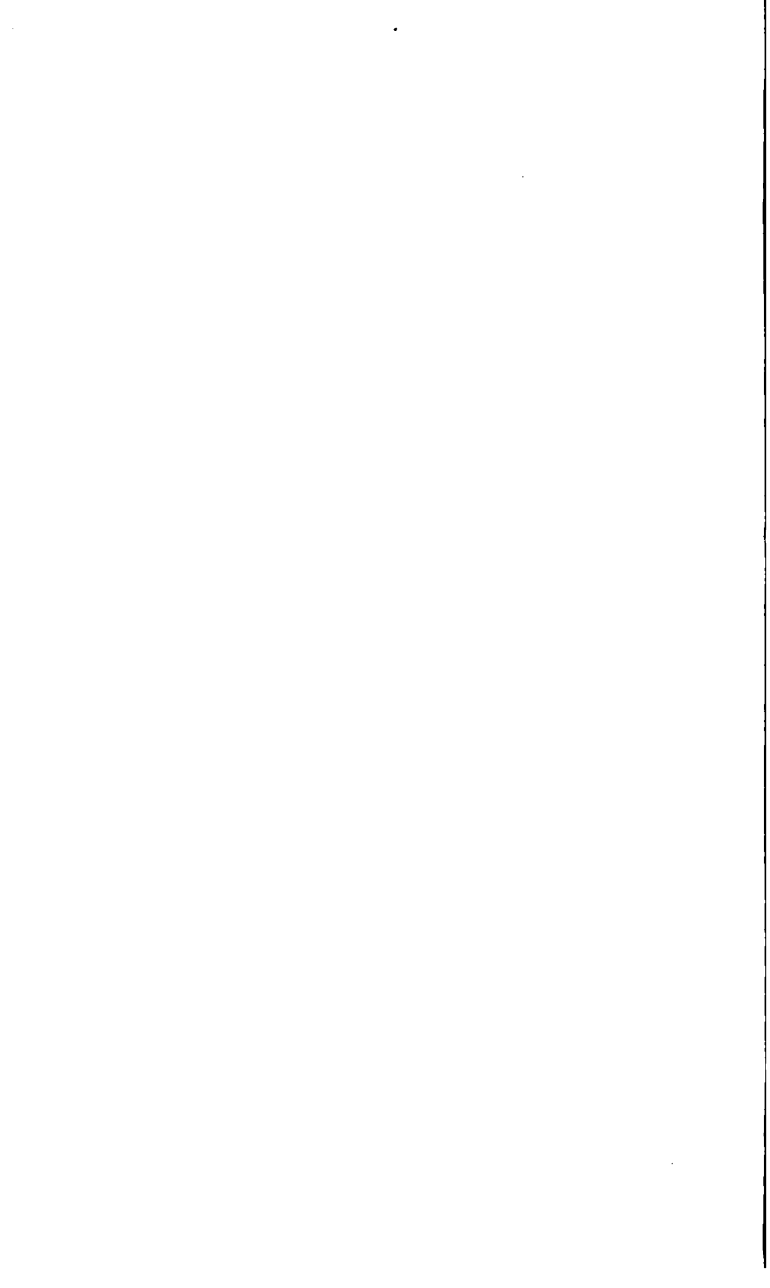
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P O E M S .

VOL. II.

1875

Mary. F. E. B. Stetson
from her Mother

POEMS

F. E. B. Stetson

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

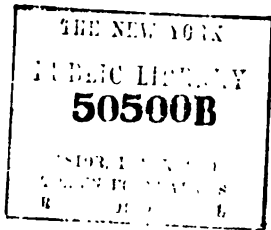
VOL. II.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.

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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
COLUMBUS	3
AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG	17
THE SOWER	22
HUNGER AND COLD	25
THE LANDLORD	30
TO A PINE-TREE	33
SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES	36
TO THE PAST	39
TO THE FUTURE	43
HEBE	48
THE SEARCH	50
THE PRESENT CRISIS	53
SUMMER STORM	63
THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND	68
A CONTRAST	73
EXTREME UNCTION	75
THE OAK	80

AMBROSE	83
ABOVE AND BELOW	87
THE CAPTIVE	90
THE BIRCH-TREE	96
AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH	98
ON THE CAPTURE OF CERTAIN FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON	106
ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES T. TORREY	111
REMEMBERED MUSIC	114
SONG: TO M. L.	116
TO THE DANDELION	118
THE GHOST-SEER	121
THE MORNING-GLORY	131
STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS	135
ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO	142
ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD	145
EURYDICE	150
SHE CAME AND WENT	155
TO W. L. GARRISON	157
THE CHANGELING	160
AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE	164
THE PIONEER	180
LONGING	183
THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL	185
ODE TO FRANCE	211

KOSSUTH	221
TO LAMARTINE	224
A PARABLE	228
ODE WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRO- DUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON	231
LINES SUGGESTED BY THE GRAVES OF TWO ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD BATTLE-GROUND	234
TO ———	238
FREEDOM	241
BIBLIOLATRES	245
BEAVER BROOK	248
TO JOHN G. PALFREY	251

. The poem called "The Morning-Glory," on page 131, it is proper to state, is by another hand.

Fannie S. Rogers.

New York

April 1869.

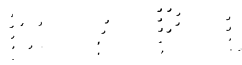
P O E M S .



COLUMBUS.



THE cordage creaks and rattles in the wind,
With freaks of sudden hush ; the reeling sea
Now thumps like solid rock beneath the stern,
Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes short, and, falling
Crumbled to whispery foam, slips rustling down
The broad backs of the waves, which jostle and crowd
To fling themselves upon that unknown shore,
Their used familiar since the dawn of time,
Whither this foredoomed life — an eminent surge
Chance-heaped a breath's space o'er the weltering press,



With deeper grip clutching the tide's green mane
And later-weaned from the mid-ocean's breast,
Yet not less frail than the individual shape
By vanishing water worn — is guided on
To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring poise
One glittering moment, then to break fulfilled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,
The melancholy wash of endless waves,
The sigh of some grim monster undescried,
Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,
Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine !
Yet night brings more companions than the day
To this drear waste ; new constellations burn,
And fairer stars, with whose calm height my soul
Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd
Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring
Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings
Against the cold bars of their unbelief,
Knowing in vain my own free heaven beyond.
O God ! this world, so crammed with eager life
That comes and goes and wanders back to silence



Like the idle wind, which yet man's shaping mind
Can make his drudge to swell the longing sails
Of highest endeavour, — this mad, unthrift world,
Which, every hour, throws life enough away
To make her deserts kind and hospitable,
Lets her great destinies be waved aside
By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,
Who weigh the God they not believe with gold,
And find no spot in Judas, save that he,
Driving a duller bargain than he ought,
Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.
O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite
Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer
Hath oftentimes shot chill palsy through the arm
Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,
And made the firm-based heart, that would have quailed
The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf
Wrinkled with frost and loose upon its stem.
The wicked and the weak, by some dark law,
Have a strange power to shut and rivet down
Their own horizon round us, to unwing
Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur

With surly clouds the Future's gleaming peaks,
Far seen across the brine of thankless years.
If the chosen soul could never be alone
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done ;
Among dull hearts a prophet never grew ;
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete ; there man with man
Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,
Life is trod under foot, — Life, the one block
Of marble that 's vouchsafed wherefrom to carve
Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to shine down
The future, Life, the irredeemable block,
Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,
Scanting our room to cut the features out
Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown
With a mean head the perfect limbs, or leave
The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,
Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world
Reels on to judgment ; there the common need,

Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond
'Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowlingly
O'er his own selfish hoard at bay ; no state,
Knit strongly with eternal fibres up
Of all men's separate and united weals,
Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as light,
Holds up a shape of large Humanity
To which by natural instinct every man
Pays loyalty exulting, by which all
Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses filled
With the red fiery blood of the general life,
Making them mighty in peace, as now in war
They are, even in the flush of victory, weak,
Conquering that manhood which should them subdue.
And what gift bring I to this untried world ?
Shall the same tragedy be played anew,
And the same lurid curtain drop at last
On one dread desolation, one fierce crash
Of that recoil which on its makers God
Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,
Early or late ? Or shall that commonwealth
Whose potent unity and concentric force

Can draw these scattered joints and parts of men
Into a whole ideal man once more,
Which sucks not from its limbs the life away,
But sends it flood-tide and creates itself
Over again in every citizen,
Be there built up ? For me, I have no choice ;
I might turn back to other destinies,
For one sincere key opes all Fortune's doors ;
But whoso answers not God's earliest call
Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme
Of lying open to his genius
Which makes the wise heart certain of its ends.

Here am I ; for what end God knows, not I ;
Westward still points the inexorable soul ;
Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,
The beating heart of this great enterprise,
Which, without me, would stiffen in swift death ;
This have I mused on, since mine eye could first
Among the stars distinguish and with joy
Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,
On some blue promontory of heaven lighted

That juts far out into the upper sea ;
To this one hope my heart hath clung for years,
As would a foundling to the talisman
Hung round his neck by hands he knew not whose,
A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,
Yet he therein can feel a virtue left
By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,
And unto him it still is tremulous
With palpitating haste and wet with tears,
The key to him of hope and humanness,
The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.
This hope hath been to me for love and fame,
Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,
Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,
Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit burned,
Conquering its little island from the Dark,
Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's steps,
In the far hurry of the outward world,
Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in dream.
As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched up
From the gross sod to be Jove's cupbearer,
So was I lifted by my great design :

And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye
Fades not that broader outlook of the gods ;
His life's low valleys overbrow earth's clouds,
And that Olympian spectre of the past
Looms towering up in sovereign memory,
Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of doom.
Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's bird,
Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me
A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,
Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low ends ;
Great days have ever such a morning-red,
On such a base great futures are built up,
And aspiration, though not put in act,
Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,
Still watches round its grave the unlaid ghost
Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,
Save that implacable one, seem thin and bleak
As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,
Bound freezing there by the unpitying moon.

While other youths perplexed their mandolins,
Praying that Thetis would her fingers twine

in the loose glories of her lover's hair,
And wile another kiss to keep back day,
I, stretched beneath the many-centuried shade
Of some writhed oak, the wood's Laocoön,
Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,
Whom I would woo to meet me privily,
Or underneath the stars, or when the moon
Flecked all the forest floor with scattered pearls.
O days whose memory tames to fawning down
The surly fell of Ocean's bristled neck !

I know not when this hope enthralled me first,
But from my boyhood up I loved to hear
The tall pine-forests of the Apennine
Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,
Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld
The sudden dark of tropic night shut down
O'er the huge whisper of great watery wastes,
The while a pair of herons trailingy
Flapped inland, where some league-wide river hurled
The yellow spoil of unconjectured realms
Far through a gulf's green silence, never scarred

By any but the Northwind's hurrying keels.
And not the pines alone ; all sights and sounds
To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,
And catered for it as the Cretan bees
Brought honey to the baby Jupiter,
Who in his soft hand crushed a violet,
Godlike foremusing the rough thunder's gripe ;
Then did I entertain the poet's song,
My great Idea's guest, and, passing o'er
That iron bridge the Tuscan built to hell,
I heard Ulysses tell of mountain-chains
Whose adamantine links, his manacles,
The western main shook growling, and still gnawed ;
I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale
Of happy Atlantis, and heard Björne's keel
Crunch the gray pebbles of the Vinland shore :
For I believed the poets ; it is they
Who utter wisdom from the central deep,
And, listening to the inner flow of things,
Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me ! old hermits sought for solitude

In caves and desert places of the earth,
Where their own heart-beat was the only stir
Of living thing that comforted the year ;
But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,
In midnight's blankest waste, were populous,
Matched with the isolation drear and deep
Of him who pines among the swarm of men,
At once a new thought's king and prisoner,
Feeling the truer life within his life,
The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,
Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop,
In the ungrateful sands of skeptic ears.
He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods
Doth walk a king ; for him the pent-up cell
Widens beyond the circles of the stars,
And all the sceptred spirits of the past
Come thronging in to greet him as their peer,
While, like an heir new-crowned, his heart o'erleaps
The blazing steps of his ancestral throne ;
But in the market-place's glare and throng
He sits apart, an exile, and his brow
Aches with the mocking memory of its crown.

But to the spirit select there is no choice ;
He cannot say, This will I do, or that,
For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends in pawn,
And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern
Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields
That yield no crop of self-denying will ;
A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,
Which grasping without question, he is led
Where there is work that he must do for God.
The trial still is the strength's complement,
And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales
The sheer heights of supremest purposes
Is steeper to the angel than the child.
Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,
And disappointment's dry and bitter root,
Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool
Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk
To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind,
And break a pathway to those unknown realms
That in the earth's broad shadow lie enthralled ;
Endurance is the crowning quality,
And patience all the passion of great hearts ;

These are their stay, and when the leaden world
Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,
And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,
Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale,
The inspired soul but flings his patience in,
And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe, —
One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear
The voice that errs not ; then my triumph gleams,
O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all night
My heart flies on before me as I sail ;
Far on I see my lifelong enterprise,
Which rose like Ganges 'mid the freezing snows
Of a world's sordidness, sweep broadening down,
And, gathering to itself a thousand streams,
Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea ;
I see the ungated wall of chaos old,
With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night,
Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist
Before the irreversible feet of light ; —

And lo, with what clear omen in the east
 On day's gray threshold stands the eager dawn,
 Like young Leander rosy from the sea
 Glowing at Hero's lattice !

One day more

These muttering shoalbrains leave the helm to me :
 God, let me not in their dull ooze be stranded ;
 Let not this one frail bark, to hollow which
 I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart
 Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so
 Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,
 Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off
 His cheek-swollen mates, and from the leaning mast
 Fortune's full sail strains forward !

One poor day ! —

Remember whose and not how short it is !
 It is God's day, it is Columbus's.
 A lavish day ! One day, with life and heart,
 Is more than time enough to find a world.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG.



THE tower of old Saint Nicholas soared upward to the
skies,
Like some huge piece of Nature's make, the growth
of centuries ;
You could not deem its crowding spires a work of
human art,
They seemed to struggle lightward from a sturdy living
heart.

Not Nature's self more freely speaks in crystal or in
oak,
Than, through the pious builder's hand, in that gray pile
she spoke ;

And as from acorn springs the oak, so, freely and
alone,
Sprang from his heart this hymn to God, sung in obedient
stone.

It seemed a wondrous freak of chance, so perfect, yet
so rough,
A whim of Nature crystallized slowly in granite
tough ;
The thick spires yearned towards the sky in quaint,
harmonious lines,
And in broad sunlight basked and slept, like a grove of
blasted pines.

Never did rock or stream or tree lay claim with better
right
To all the adorning sympathies of shadow and of
light ;
And, in that forest petrified, as forester there
dwells
Stout Herman, the old sacristan, sole lord of all its
bells.

Surge leaping after surge, the fire roared onward red
as blood,

Till half of Hamburg lay engulfed beneath the eddying
flood ;

For miles away, the fiery spray poured down its deadly
rain,

And back and forth the billows sucked, and paused, and
burst again.

From square to square with tiger leaps rushed on the
lustful fire,

The air to leeward shuddered with the gasps of its de-
sire ;

And church and palace, which even now stood whelmed
but to the knee,

Lift their black roofs like breakers lone amid the whirl-
ing sea.

Up in his tower old Herman sat and watched with quiet
look ;

His soul had trusted God too long to be at last for-
sook ;

He could not fear, for surely God a pathway would un-
fold
Through this red sea for faithful hearts, as once he did
of old.

But scarcely can he cross himself, or on his good saint
call,
Before the sacrilegious flood o'erleaped the church-yard
wall ;
And, ere a *pater* half was said, 'mid smoke and crack-
ling glare,
His island tower scarce juts its head above the wide de-
spair.

Upon the peril's desperate peak his heart stood up sub-
lime ;
His first thought was for God above, his next was for
his chime ;
"Sing now and make your voices heard in hymns of
praise," cried he,
"As did the Israelites of old, safe walking through the
sea !

“ Through this red sea our God hath made the pathway
safe to shore ;

Our promised land stands full in sight ; shout now as
ne'er before ! ”

And as the tower came crushing down, the bells, in
clear accord,

Pealed forth the grand old German hymn, — “ All good
souls, praise the Lord ! ”

THE SOWER.



I saw a Sower walking slow
Across the earth, from east to west ;
His hair was white as mountain snow,
His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,
Nor ever turned to look behind ;
Of sight or sound he took no heed ;
It seemed he was both deaf and blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,
Yet in my heart I felt a stir,

As if I looked upon the sheath
That once had clasped Excalibur.

I heard, as still the seed he cast,
How, crooning to himself, he sung,—
“ I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young.

“ Then all was wheat without a tare,
Then all was righteous, fair, and true ;
And I am he whose thoughtful care
Shall plant the Old World in the New.

“ The fruitful germs I scatter free,
With busy hand, while all men sleep ;
In Europe now, from sea to sea,
The nations bless me as they reap.”

Then I looked back along his path,
And heard the clash of steel on steel,
Where man faced man, in deadly wrath,
While clanged the tocsin's hurrying peal.

The sky with burning towns flared red,
Nearer the noise of fighting rolled,
And brothers' blood, by brothers shed,
Crept, curdling, over pavements cold.

Then marked I how each germ of truth
Which through the dotard's fingers ran
Was mated with a dragon's tooth,
Whence there sprang up an armed man.

I shouted, but he could not hear ;
Made signs, but these he could not see ;
And still, without a doubt or fear,
Broadcast he scattered anarchy.

Long to my straining ears the blast
Brought faintly back the words he sung : —
“ I sow again the holy Past,
The happy days when I was young.”

HUNGER AND COLD.



SISTERS two, all praise to you,
With your faces pinched and blue ;
To the poor man you 've been true
From of old :
You can speak the keenest word,
You are sure of being heard,
From the point you 're never stirred,
Hunger and Cold !

Let sleek statesmen temporize ;
Palsied are their shifts and lies
When they meet your bloodshot eyes,
Grim and bold ;

Policy you set at naught,
In their traps you'll not be caught,
You're too honest to be bought,
Hunger and Cold!

Bolt and bar the palace-door ;
While the mass of men are poor,
Naked truth grows more and more
Uncontrolled ;
You had never yet, I guess,
Any praise for bashfulness,
You can visit sans court-dress,
Hunger and Cold!

While the music fell and rose,
And the dance reeled to its close,
Where her round of costly woes
Fashion strolled,
I beheld with shuddering fear
Wolves' eyes through the windows peer ;
Little dream they you are near,
Hunger and Cold!

When the toiler's heart you clutch,
Conscience is not valued much,
He recks not a bloody smutch
On his gold :
Every thing to you defers,
You are potent reasoners,
At your whisper Treason stirs,
Hunger and Cold !

Rude comparisons you draw,
Words refuse to sate your maw,
Your gaunt limbs the cobweb law
Cannot hold :
You 're not clogged with foolish pride,
But can seize a right denied ;
Somehow God is on your side,
Hunger and Cold !

You respect no hoary wrong
More for having triumphed long ;
Its past victims, haggard throng,
From the mould

You unbury : swords and spears
Weaker are than poor men's tears,
Weaker than your silent years,
Hunger and Cold !

Let them guard both hall and bower ;
Through the window you will glower,
Patient till your reckoning hour
Shall be tolled :

Cheeks are pale, but hands are red,
Guiltless blood may chance be shed,
But ye must and will be fed,
Hunger and Cold !

God has plans man must not spoil,
Some were made to starve and toil,
Some to share the wine and oil,
We are told :

Devil's theories are these,
Stifling hope and love and peace,
Framed your hideous lusts to please,
Hunger and Cold !

Scatter ashes on thy head,
Tears of burning sorrow shed,
Earth ! and be by Pity led
 To Love's fold ;
Ere they block the very door
With lean corpses of the poor,
And will hush for naught but gore, —
 Hunger and Cold !

1844.

THE LANDLORD.



WHAT boot your houses and your lands ?
In spite of close-drawn deed and fence,
Like water, 'twixt your cheated hands,
They slip into the graveyard's sands
And mock your ownership's pretence.

How shall you speak to urge your right,
Choked with that soil for which you lust ?
The bit of clay, for whose delight
You grasp, is mortgaged, too ; Death might
Foreclose this very day in dust.

Fence as you please, this plain poor man,
Whose only fields are in his wit,
Who shapes the world, as best he can,
According to God's higher plan,
Owns you, and fences as is fit.

Though yours the rents, his incomes wax
By right of eminent domain ;
From factory tall to woodman's axe,
All things on earth must pay their tax,
To feed his hungry heart and brain.

He takes you from your easy-chair,
And what he plans, that you must do ;
You sleep in down, eat dainty fare, —
He mounts his crazy garret-stair
And starves, the landlord over you.

Feeding the clods your idlesse drains,
You make more green six feet of soil ;
His fruitful word, like suns and rains,
Partakes the seasons' bounteous pains,
And toils to lighten human toil.

Your lands, with force or cunning got,
 Shrink to the measure of the grave ;
But Death himself abridges not
The tenures of almighty thought,
 The titles of the wise and brave.

TO A PINE-TREE.



FAR up on Katahdin thou towerest,
Purple-blue with the distance and vast ;
Like a cloud o'er the lowlands thou lowerest,
That hangs poised on a lull in the blast,
To its fall leaning awful.

In the storm, like a prophet o'ermaddened,
Thou singest and tосsest thy branches ;
Thy heart with the terror is gladdened,
Thou forebodest the dread avalanches,
When whole mountains swoop valeward.

In the calm thou o'erstretchest the valleys
With thine arms, as if blessings imploring,
Like an old king led forth from his palace,
When his people to battle are pouring
From the city beneath him.

To the lumberer asleep 'neath thy booming
Thou dost sing of wild billows in motion,
Till he longs to be swung 'mid their booming
In the tents of the Arabs of ocean,
Whose finned isles are their cattle.

For the gale snatches thee for his lyre,
With mad hand crashing melody frantic,
While he pours forth his mighty desire
To leap down on the eager Atlantic,
Whose arms stretch to his playmate.

The wild storm makes his lair in thy branches,
And thence preys on the continent under ;
Like a lion, crouched close on his haunches,
There awaiteth his leap the fierce thunder,
Growling low with impatience.

Spite of winter, thou keep'st thy green glory,
Lusty father of Titans past number !
The snow-flakes alone make thee hoary,
Nestling close to thy branches in slumber,
And thee mantling with silence.

Thou alone know'st the splendor of winter,
'Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed precipices,
Hearing crags of green ice groan and splinter,
And then plunge down the muffled abysses
In the quiet of midnight.

Thou alone know'st the glory of summer,
Gazing down on thy broad seas of forest,
On thy subjects, that send a proud murmur
Up to thee, to their sachem, who towerest
From thy bleak throne to heaven.

SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES.



O, WANDERING dim on the extremest edge
 Of God's bright providence, whose spirits sigh
 Drearly in you, like the winter sedge
 That shivers o'er the dead pool stiff and dry,
 A thin, sad voice, when the bold wind roars by
 From the clear North of Duty, —
 Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I trace
 That here was once a shrine and holy place
 Of the supernal Beauty, —
 A child's play-altar reared of stones and moss,
 With wilted flowers for offering laid across,
 Mute recognition of the all-ruling Grace.

How far are ye from the innocent, from those
Whose hearts are as a little lane serene,
Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with unbroke snows,
Or in the summer blithe with lamb-cropped green,
Save the one track, where naught more rude is seen
Than the plump wain at even
Bringing home four months' sunshine bound in sheaves!—
How far are ye from those! yet who believes
That ye can shut out heaven?
Your souls partake its influence, not in vain
Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane
Its drift of noiseless apple-blooms receives.

Looking within myself, I note how thin
A plank of station, chance, or prosperous fate
Doth fence me from the clutching waves of sin;—
In my own heart I find the worst man's mate,
And see not dimly the smooth-hinged gate
That opes to those abysses
Where ye grope darkly, — ye who never knew
On your young hearts love's consecrating dew,
Or felt a mother's kisses,

Or home's restraining tendrils round you curled ;
Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this world
The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue !

One band ye cannot break, — the force that clips
And grasps your circles to the central light ;
Yours is the prodigal comet's long ellipse,
Self-exiled to the farthest verge of night ;
Yet strives with you no less that inward might
No sin hath e'er imbruted ;
'The god in you the creed-dimmed eye eludes ;
The Law brooks not to have its solitudes
By bigot feet polluted ; —
Yet they who watch your God-compelled return
May see your happy perihelion burn
Where the calm sun his unfledged planets broods.

TO THE PAST.



WONDROUS and awful are thy silent halls,
O kingdom of the past !
There lie the bygone ages in their palls,
Guarded by shadows vast, —
There all is hushed and breathless,
Save when some image of old error falls
Earth worshipped once as deathless.

There sits drear Egypt, 'mid beleaguering sands,
Half woman and half beast,
The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands
That once lit all the East ;

A dotard bleared and hoary,
There Asser crouches o'er the blackened brands
Of Asia's long-quenched glory.

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea
Thy courts and temples stand ;
Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry
Of saints and heroes grand,
Thy phantasms grope and shiver,
Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently
Into Time's gnawing river.

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,
Of their old godhead lorn,
Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,
Which they misdeem for morn ;
And yet the eternal sorrow
In their unmonarched eyes says day is done
Without the hope of morrow.

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,
The shapes that haunt thy gloom

Make signs to us and move their withered lips
 Across the gulf of doom ;
 Yet all their sound and motion
Bring no more freight to us than wraiths of ships
 On the mirage's ocean.

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth
 From out thy desolate halls,
If some grim shadow of thy living death
 Across our sunshine falls
 And scares the world to error,
The eternal life sends forth melodious breath
 To chase the misty terror.

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-noised deeds
 Are silent now in dust,
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds
 Beneath some sudden gust ;
 Thy forms and creeds have vanished,
Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds
 From the world's garden banished.

Whatever of true life there was in thee
 Leaps in our age's veins ;
Wield still thy bent and wrinkled empery,
 And shake thine idle chains ;—
 To thee thy dross is clinging,
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,
 Thy poets still are singing.

Here, 'mid the bleak waves of our strife and care,
 Float the green Fortunate Isles
Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share
 Our martyrdoms and toils ;
 The present moves attended
With all of brave and excellent and fair
 That made the old time splendid.

TO THE FUTURE.



O LAND of Promise ! from what Pisgah's height
Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful bowers,
Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,
Thy nestled homes and sun-illumined towers ?
Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped gold,
Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,
Its deeps on deeps of glory, that unfold
Still brightening abysses,
And blazing precipices,
Whence but a scanty leap it seems to heaven,
Sometimes a glimpse is given
Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more unstinted blisses.

O Land of Quiet ! to thy shore the surf
Of the perturbed Present rolls and sleeps ;
Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy turf
And lure out blossoms ; to thy bosom leaps,
As to a mother's, the o'erwearied heart,
Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,
The hurrying feet, the curses without number,
And, circled with the glow Elysian
Of thine exulting vision,
Out of its very cares woos charms for peace and slumber.

To thee the Earth lifts up her fettered hands
And cries for vengeance ; with a pitying smile
Thou blessest her, and she forgets her bands,
And her old woe-worn face a little while
Grows young and noble ; unto thee the Oppressor
Looks, and is dumb with awe ;
The eternal law,
Which makes the crime its own blindfold redresser,
Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,
And he can see the grim-eyed Doom
From out the trembling gloom
Its silent-footed steeds toward his palace goading.

What promises hast thou for Poets' eyes,

Aweary of the turmoil and the wrong !

To all their hopes what overjoyed replies !

What undreamed ecstasies for blissful song !

Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling clangor

Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the poor ;

The humble glares not on the high with anger ;

Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed for more ;

In vain strives Self the godlike sense to smother ;

From the soul's deeps

It throbs and leaps ;

The noble 'neath foul rags beholds his long-lost brother.

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires

Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit free ;

To thee the Poet 'mid his toil aspires,

And grief and hunger climb about his knee,

Welcome as children ; thou upholdest

The lone Inventor by his demon haunted ;

The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are coldest,

And, gazing o'er the midnight's bleak abyss,

Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy kiss,

And stretch its happy arms and leap up disenchantèd.

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving-kindly
 The guilty thinks it pity ; taught by thee,
 Fierce tyrants drop the scourges wherewith blindly
 Their own souls they were scarring ; conquerors
 see
 With horror in their hands the accursed spear
 That tore the meek One's side on Calvary,
 And from their trophies shrink with ghastly fear ;
 Thou, too, art the Forgiver,
 The beauty of man's soul to man revealing ;
 The arrows from thy quiver
 Pierce error's guilty heart, but only pierce for healing.

O, whither, whither, glory-winged dreams,
 From out Life's sweat and turmoil would ye bear
 me?
 Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden gleams, —
 This agony of hopeless contrast spare me !
 Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my night !
 He is a coward, who would borrow
 A charm against the present sorrow
 From the vague Future's promise of delight :

As life's alarums nearer roll,
The ancestral buckler calls,
Self-clanging, from the walls
In the high temple of the soul ;
Where are most sorrows, there the poet's sphere is,
To feed the soul with patience,
To heal its desolations
With words of unshorn truth, with love that never
wearies.

HEBE.



I SAW the twinkle of white feet,
I saw the flash of robes descending ;
 Before her ran an influence fleet,
That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,
 It led me on, by sweet degrees
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates ;
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me ;
 The long-sought Secret's golden gates
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp
Thrilling with godhood ; like a lover
I sprang the proffered life to clasp ; —
The beaker fell ; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up ;
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters ?
Can Summer fill the icy cup,
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's ?

O spendthrift Haste ! await the Gods ;
Their nectar crowns the lips of Patience ;
Haste scatters on unthankful sods
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,
And shuns the hands would seize upon her ;
Follow thy life, and she will sue
To pour for thee the cup of honor.

THE SEARCH.



I WENT to seek for Christ,
And Nature seemed so fair
That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,
And I was sure to find him there :
The temple I forsook,
And to the solitude
Allegiance paid ; but Winter came and shook
The crown and purple from my wood ;
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,
Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate ;
My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn rift,
But epitaphed her own sepulchred state :
Then I remembered whom I went to seek,
And blessed blunt Winter for his council bleak.

Back to the world I turned,
 For Christ, I said, is King ;
 So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,
 As far beneath his sojourning :
 'Mid power and wealth I sought,
 But found no trace of him,
And all the costly offerings I had brought
 With sudden rust and mould grew dim :
 I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,
 All must on stated days themselves imprison,
 Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,
 Witless how long the life had thence arisen ;
 Due sacrifice to this they set apart,
Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

 So from my feet the dust
 Of the proud World I shook ;
 Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust,
 And half my sorrow's burden took.
 After the World's soft bed,
 Its rich and dainty fare,
Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,
 His cheap food seemed as manna rare ;

Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,
Turned to the heedless city whence I came,
Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet
Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same ;
Love looked me in the face and spake no words,
But straight I knew those foot-prints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,
And in a hovel rude,
With naught to fence the weather from his head,
The King I sought for meekly stood ;
A naked, hungry child
Clung round his gracious knee,
And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
To bless the smile that set him free ;
New miracles I saw his presence do, —
No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,
The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,
The broken morsel swelled to goodly store ;
I knelt and wept : my Christ no more I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

THE PRESENT CRISIS.



WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad
earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east
to west,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul
within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sub-
lime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem
of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instan-
taneous throe,
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to
and fro ;
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing
start,
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips
apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath
the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a
chill,
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming
ill,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies
with God
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by
the sod,
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the
nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears
 along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right
 or wrong ;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast
 frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy
 or shame ; —
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal
 claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to
 decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or
 evil side ;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each
 the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon
 the right,
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness
 and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou
shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust
against our land ?
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is Truth alone
is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her
throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all
wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments
see,
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through
Oblivion's sea ;
Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding
cry
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose
feet earth's chaff must fly ;
Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment
hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger ; history's pages but
record

One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems
and the Word ;

Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the
throne, —

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim
unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above
his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is
great,

Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm
of fate,

But the soul is still oracular ; amid the market's
din,

List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave
within, —

“ They enslave their children's children who make com-
promise with sin.”

Slavery, the earthborn Cyclops, fellest of the giant
brood,
Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched
the earth with blood,
Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer
day,
Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable
prey;—
Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless
children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her
wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 't is prosper-
ous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward
stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is cruci-
fied,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had
denied.

Count me o'er Earth's chosen heroes, — they were
souls that stood alone

While the men they agonized for hurled the contume-
lious stone,

Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam
incline

To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith
divine,

By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's
supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet
I track,

Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns
not back,

And these mounts of anguish number how each genera-
tion learned

One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-
hearts hath burned

Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face
to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward : where to-day the mar-
tyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his
hands ;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling
fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe
return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden
urn.

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle
slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers'
graves ;
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light
a crime ;—
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by
men behind their time ?
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make
Plymouth rock sublime ?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the
Past's ;
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that
hath made us free,
Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender
spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them
across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them ; we are
traitors to our sires,
Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-
fires ;
Shall we make their creed our jailer ? Shall we, in our
haste to slay,
From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral
lamps away
To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of
to-day ?

New occasions teach new duties ; Time makes ancient
good uncouth ;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep
abreast of Truth ;
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires ! we ourselves must
Pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the
desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-
rusted key.

December, 1845.

SUMMER STORM.



UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,
Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge ;
So still the air, that I can hear
The slender clarion of the unseen midge ;
Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,
Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,
Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,
The huddling trample of a drove of sheep
Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases
In dust on the other side ; life's emblem deep,
A confused noise between two silences,
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.

On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses
Soak up the sunshine ; sleeps the brimming tide,
Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes
Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide
Wavers the long green sedge's shade from side to side ;
But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray ;
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,
And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs away.

Suddenly all the sky is hid
As with the shutting of a lid,
One by one great drops are falling
Doubtful and slow,
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,
And the wind breathes low ;
Slowly the circles widen on the river,
Widen and mingle, one and all ;
Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,
Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,
The wind is gathering in the west ;

The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,
 Then droop to a fitful rest ;
Up from the stream with sluggish flap
 Struggles the gull, and floats away ;
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap, —
 We shall not see the sun go down to-day :
Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,
 And tramples the grass with terrified feet,
The startled river turns leaden and harsh,
 You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

 Look ! look ! that livid flash !
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,
As if some cloud-crag, split asunder,
 Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,
On the Earth, which crouches in silence under ;
 And now a solid gray wall of rain
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile ;
 For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,
And, ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,
 That seemed but now a league aloof,
Bursts rattling over the sun-parched roof ;

Against the windows the storm comes dashing,
Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,
The blue lightning flashes,
The rapid hail clashes,
The white waves are tumbling,
And, in one baffled roar,
Like the toothless sea mumbling
A rock-bridled shore,
The thunder is rumbling
And crashing and crumbling, —
Will silence return never more ?

Hush ! Still as death,
The tempest holds his breath
As from a sudden will ;
The rain stops short, but from the eaves
You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,
All is so bodingly still ;
Again, now, now, again
Plashes the rain in heavy gout,
The crinkled lightning
Seems ever brightening,

And loud and long
Again the thunder shouts
His battle-song, —
One quivering flash,
One wildering crash,
Followed by silence dead and dull,
As if the cloud, let go,
Leapt bodily below
To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,
And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon !
No more my half-crazed fancy there
Can shape a giant in the air,
No more I see his streaming hair,
The writhing portent of his form ; —
The pale and quiet moon
Makes her calm forehead bare,
And the last fragments of the storm,
Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,
Silent and few, are drifting over me.

THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND.

A FRAGMENT.

A LEGEND that grew in the forest's hush
Slowly as tear-drops gather and gush,
When a word some poet chanced to say
Ages ago, in his careless way,
Brings our youth back to us out of its shroud
Clearly as under yon thunder-cloud .
I see that white sea-gull. It grew and grew,
From the pine-trees gathering a sombre hue,
Till it seems a mere murmur out of the vast
Norwegian forests of the past ;
And it grew itself like a true Northern pine,
First a little slender line,

Like a mermaid's green eyelash, and then anon
A stem that a tower might rest upon,
Standing spear-straight in the waist-deep moss,
Its bony roots clutching around and across,
As if they would tear up earth's heart in their grasp
Ere the storm should uproot them or make them unclasp ;
Its cloudy boughs singing, as suiteth the pine,
To shrunk snow-bearded sea-kings old songs of the brine,
Till they straightened and let their staves fall to the floor,
Hearing waves moan again on the perilous shore
Of Vinland, perhaps, while their prow groped its way
'Twixt the frothy gnashed tusks of some ship-crunching
 bay.

So, pine-like, the legend grew, strong-limbed and tall,
As the Gypsy child grows that eats crusts in the hall ;
It sucked the whole strength of the earth and the sky,
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, all brought it supply,
'T was a natural growth, and stood fearlessly there,
A true part of the landscape as sea, land, and air ;
For it grew in good times, ere the fashion it was
To force up these wild births of the woods under glass,

And so, if 't is told as it should be told,
Though 't were sung under Venice's moonlight of
gold,

You would hear the old voice of its mother, the pine,
Murmur sealike and Northern through every line,
And the verses should hang, self-sustained and free,
Round the vibrating stem of the melody,
Like the lithe sun-steeped limbs of the parent tree.

Yes, the pine is the mother of legends ; what food
For their grim roots is left when the thousand-year'd
wood —

The dim-aisled cathedral, whose tall arches spring
Light, sinewy, graceful, firm-set as the wing
From Michael's white shoulder — is hewn and defaced
By iconoclast axes in desperate waste,
And its wrecks seek the ocean it prophesied long,
Cassandra-like, crooning its mystical song ?
Then the legends go with them, — even yet on the sea
A wild virtue is left in the touch of the tree,
And the sailor's night-watches are thrilled to the core
With the lineal offspring of Odin and Thor.

Yes, wherever the pine-wood has never let in,
Since the day of creation, the light and the din
Of manifold life, but has safely conveyed
From the midnight primeval its armful of shade,
And has kept the weird Past with its sagas alive
Within sound of the hum of To-day's busy hive,
There the legend takes root in the age-gathered gloom,
And its murmurous boughs for their tossing find room.

Where Aroostook, far-heard, seems to sob as he goes
Groping down to the sea 'neath his mountainous snows ;
Where the lake's frore Sahara of never-tracked white,
When the crack shoots across it, complains to the night
With a long, lonely moan, that leagues northward is lost,
As the ice shrinks away from the tread of the frost ;
Where the lumberers sit by the log-fires which throw
Their own threatening shadows far round o'er the snow,
When the wolf howls aloof, and the wavering glare
Flashes out from the blackness the eyes of the bear,
When the wood's huge recesses, half-lighted, supply
A canvas where Fancy her mad brush may try,

Blotting in giant Horrors that venture not down
Through the right-angled streets of the brisk, white-
washed town,
But skulk in the depths of the measureless wood
'Mid the Dark's creeping whispers that curdle the blood,
When the eye, glanced in dread o'er the shoulder, may
dream,
Ere it shrinks to the camp-fire's companioning gleam,
That it saw the fierce ghost of the Red Man crouch back
To the shroud of the tree-trunk's invincible black ; —
There the old shapes crowd thick round the pine-
shadowed camp,
Which shun the keen gleam of the scholarly lamp,
And the seed of the legend finds true Norland ground,
While the border-tale 's told and the canteen flits round.

A CONTRAST



THY love thou sentest oft to me,
And still as oft I thrust it back ;
Thy messengers I could not see
In those who every thing did lack, —
The poor, the outcast, and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,
The world with flattery stuffed mine ears ;
I looked to see a monarch's guise,
Nor dreamed thy love would knock for years,
Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,
 Thou with a smile didst take it in,
And entertain'dst it royally,
 Though grimed with earth, with hunger thin,
 And leprous with the taint of sin.

Now every day thy love I meet,
 As o'er the earth it wanders wide,
With weary step and bleeding feet,
 Still knocking at the heart of pride
 And offering grace, though still denied.

EXTREME UNCTION.

Go ! leave me, Priest ; my soul would be
Alone with the consoler, Death ;
Far sadder eyes than thine will see
This crumbling clay yield up its breath ;
These shrivelled hands have deeper stains
Than holy oil can cleanse away, —
Hands that have plucked the world's coarse gains
As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to those gray eyes
Some faith from youth's traditions wrung ;
This fruitless husk which dustward dries
Has been a heart once, has been young ;

On this bowed head the awful Past
Once laid its consecrating hands ;
The Future in its purpose vast
Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look ! whose shadows block the door ?
Who are those two that stand aloof ?
See ! on my hands this freshening gore
Writes o'er again its crimson proof !
My looked-for death-bed guests are met ; —
There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,
And there, with eyes that goad me yet,
The ghost of my Ideal stands !

God bends from out the deep and says, —
“ I gave thee the great gift of life ;
Wast thou not called in many ways ?
Are not my earth and heaven at strife ?
I gave thee of my seed to sow,
Bringest thou me my hundred-fold ? ”
Can I look up with face aglow,
And answer, “ Father, here is gold ” ?

I have been innocent ; God knows
 When first this wasted life began,
Not grape with grape more kindly grows,
 Than I with every brother-man :
Now here I gasp ; what lose my kind,
 When this fast-ebbing breath shall part ?
What bands of love and service bind
 This being to the world's sad heart ?

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth
 Without a place to lay his head ;
He found free welcome at my hearth,
 He shared my cup and brake my bread :
Now, when I hear those steps sublime,
 That bring the other world to this,
My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,
 Starts sideway with defiant hiss.

Upon the hour when I was born,
 God said, " Another man shall be,"
And the great Maker did not scorn
 Out of himself to fashion me ;

He sunned me with his ripening looks,
And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
As effortless as woodland nooks
Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,
Am exiled back to brutish clod,
Have borne unquenched for fourscore years
A spark of the eternal God ;
And to what end ? How yield I back
The trust for such high uses given ?
Heaven's light hath but revealed a track
Whereby to crawl away from heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight
To see a soul just set adrift
On that drear voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift ;
But 't is more awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once ; I flung away
 Those keys that might have open set
The golden sluices of the day,
 But clutch the keys of darkness yet ;—
I hear the reapers singing go
 Into God's harvest ; I, that might
With them have chosen, here below
 Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine !
 O high Ideal ! all in vain
Ye enter at this ruined shrine
 Whence worship ne'er shall rise again ;
The bat and owl inhabit here,
 The snake nests in the altar-stone,
The sacred vessels moulder near,
 The image of the God is gone.

THE OAK.



WHAT gnarled stretch, what depth of shade, is his!

There needs no crown to mark the forest's king;
How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss!

Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,
Which he with such benignant royalty

Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent;
All nature seems his vassal proud to be,
And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows,

An unquelled exile from the summer's throne,
Whose plain, unincinctured front more kingly shows,
Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown!

His boughs make music of the winter air,
 Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front
Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair
 The dents and furrows of Time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind
 Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,
And win the soil, that fain would be unkind,
 To swell his revenues with proud increase!
He is the gem; and all the landscape wide
 (So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)
Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,
 An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,
 Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots
The inspiring earth; — how otherwise avails
 The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots?
So every year that falls with noiseless flake
 Should fill old scars up on the stormward side,
And make hoar age revered for age's sake,
 Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,
True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,
So between earth and heaven stand simply great,
That these shall seem but their attendants both ;
For nature's forces with obedient zeal
Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will ;
As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,
And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord ! all thy works are lessons, — each contains
Some emblem of man's all-containing soul ;
Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains,
Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole ?
Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,
Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,
Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love
Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.

AMBROSE.



NEVER, surely, was holier man
Than Ambrose, since the world began ;
With diet spare and raiment thin,
He shielded himself from the father of sin ;
With bed of iron and scourgings oft,
His heart to God's hand as wax made soft.

Through earnest prayer and watchings long
He sought to know 'twixt right and wrong,
Much wrestling with the blessed Word
To make it yield the sense of the Lord,
That he might build a storm-proof creed
To fold the flock in at their need.

At last he builded a perfect faith,
Fenced round about with *The Lord thus saith* ;
To himself he fitted the doorway's size,
Meted the light to the need of his eyes,
And knew, by a sure and inward sign,
That the work of his fingers was divine.

Then Ambrose said, " All those shall die
The eternal death who believe not as I " ;
And some were boiled, some burned in fire,
Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,
For the good of men's souls, might be satisfied,
By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth
In his lonely walk, he saw a youth
Resting himself in the shade of a tree ;
It had never been given him to see
So shining a face, and the good man thought,
'T were pity he should not believe as he ought.

So he sat himself by the young man's side,
And the state of his soul with questions tried ;

But the heart of the stranger was hardened indeed,
Nor received the stamp of the one true creed,
And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to find
Such face in front of so narrow a mind.

“ As each beholds in cloud and fire
The shape that answers his own desire,
So each,” said the youth, “ in the Law shall find
The figure and features of his mind ;
And to each in his mercy hath God allowed
His several pillar of fire and cloud.”

The soul of Ambrose burned with zeal
And holy wrath for the young man's weal :
“ Believeest thou, then, most wretched youth,”
Cried he, “ a dividual essence in Truth ?
I fear me thy heart is too cramped with sin
To take the Lord in his glory in.”

Now there bubbled beside them, where they stood,
A fountain of waters sweet and good ;
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near
Saying, “ Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here ! ”

Six vases of crystal then he took,
And set them along the edge of the brook.

“ As into these vessels the water I pour,
There shall one hold less, another more,
And the water unchanged, in every case,
Shall put on the figure of the vase ;
O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,
Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life ? ”

When Ambrose looked up, he stood alone,
The youth and the stream and the vases were gone ;
But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,
He had talked with an angel, face to face,
And felt his heart change inwardly,
As he fell on his knees beneath the tree.

ABOVE AND BELOW.



L

O DWELLERS in the valley-land,
 Who in deep twilight grope and cower,
 Till the slow mountain's dial-hand
 Shortens to noon's triumphal hour, —
 While ye sit idle, do ye think
 The Lord's great work sits idle too?
 That light dare not o'erleap the brink
 Of morn, because 't is dark with you?

Though yet your valleys skulk in night,
 In God's ripe fields the day is cried,

And reapers, with their sickles bright,
 Troop, singing, down the mountain-side :
 Come up, and feel what health there is
 In the frank Dawn's delighted eyes,
 As, bending with a pitying kiss,
 The night-shed tears of Earth she dries !

The Lord wants reapers : O, mount up,
 Before night comes, and says, — " Too late !"
 Stay not for taking scrip or cup,
 The Master hungers while ye wait :
 'T is from these heights alone your eyes
 The advancing spears of day can see,
 Which o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,
 To break your long captivity.

II.

Lone watcher on the mountain-height !
 It is right precious to behold
 The first long surf of climbing light
 Flood all the thirsty east with gold ;

But we, who in the shadow sit,
 Know also when the day is nigh,
 Seeing thy shining forehead lit
 With his inspiring prophecy.

Thou hast thine office ; we have ours ;
 God lacks not early service here,
 But what are thine eleventh hours
 He counts with us for morning cheer ;
 Our day, for Him, is long enough,
 And when He giveth work to do,
 The bruised reed is amply tough
 To pierce the shield of error through.

But not the less do thou aspire
 Light's earlier messages to preach ;
 Keep back no syllable of fire, —
 Plunge deep the rowels of thy speech.
 Yet God deems not thine aëried sight
 More worthy than our twilight dim, —
 For meek Obedience, too, is Light,
 And following that is finding Him.

THE CAPTIVE.



It was past the hour of trysting,
But she lingered for him still ;
Like a child, the eager streamlet
Leaped and laughed adown the hill,
Happy to be free at twilight
From its toiling at the mill.

Then the great moon on a sudden,
Ominous, and red as blood,
Startling as a new creation,
O'er the eastern hill-top stood,

Casting deep and deeper shadows
Through the mystery of the wood.

Dread closed huge and vague about her,
And her thoughts turned fearfully
To her heart, if there some shelter
From the silence there might be,
Like bare cedars leaning inland
From the blighting of the sea.

Yet he came not, and the stillness
Dampened round her like a tomb ;
She could feel cold eyes of spirits
Looking on her through the gloom,
She could hear the groping footsteps
Of some blind, gigantic doom.

Suddenly the silence wavered
Like a light mist in the wind,
For a voice broke gently through it,
Felt like sunshine by the blind,

And the dread, like mist in sunshine,
Furled serenely from her mind.

“ Once my love, my love for ever, —
Flesh or spirit, still the same ;
If I missed the hour of trysting,
Do not think my faith to blame,
I, alas, was made a captive,
As from Holy Land I came.

“ On a green spot in the desert,
Gleaming like an emerald star,
Where a palm-tree, in lone silence,
Yearning for its mate afar,
Droops above a silver runnel,
Slender as a scymitar, —

“ There thou ’lt find the humble postern
To the castle of my foe ;
If thy love burn clear and faithful,
Strike the gateway, green and low,

Ask to enter, and the warder
Surely will not say thee no."

Slept again the aspen silence,
But her loneliness was o'er ;
Round her heart a motherly patience
Wrapt its arms for evermore ;
From her soul ebb'd back the sorrow,
Leaving smooth the golden shore.

Donned she now the pilgrim scallop,
Took the pilgrim staff in hand ;
Like a cloud-shade, flitting eastward,
Wandered she o'er sea and land ;
Her soft footsteps in the desert
Fell like cool rain on the sand.

Soon, beneath the palm-tree's shadow,
Knelt she at the postern low ;
And thereat she knocketh gently,
Fearing much the warder's no ;

All her heart stood still and listened,
As the door swung backward slow.

There she saw no surly warder
With an eye like bolt and bar ;
Through her soul a sense of music
Throbbled,— and, like a guardian Lar,
On the threshold stood an angel,
Bright and silent as a star.

Fairest seemed he of God's seraphs,
And her spirit, lily-wise,
Blossomed when he turned upon her
The deep welcome of his eyes,
Sending upward to that sunlight
All its dew for sacrifice.

Then she heard a voice come onward
Singing with a rapture new,
As Eve heard the songs in Eden,
Dropping earthward with the dew ;

Well she knew the happy singer,
Well the happy song she knew.

Forward leaped she o'er the threshold,
Eager as a glancing surf ;
Fell from her the spirit's languor,
Fell from her the body's scurf ;—
'Neath the palm next day some Arabs
Found a corpse upon the turf.

THE BIRCH-TREE.



RIPPLING through thy branches goes the sunshine,
Among thy leaves that palpitate for ever ;
Ovid in thee a pining Nymph had prisoned,
The soul once of some tremulous inland river,
Quivering to tell her woe, but, ah ! dumb, dumb for ever !

While all the forest, witched with slumberous moonshine,
Holds up its leaves in happy, happy silence,
Waiting the dew, with breath and pulse suspended, —
I hear afar thy whispering, gleamy islands,
And track thee wakeful still amid the wide-hung silence.

Upon the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,
Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,

Dripping about thy slim white stem, whose shadow
Slopes quivering down the water's dusky quiet,
Thou shrink'st as on her bath's edge would some
startled Dryad.

Thou art the go-between of rustic lovers ;
Thy white bark has their secrets in its keeping ;
Reuben writes here the happy name of Patience,
And thy lithe boughs hang murmuring and weeping
Above her, as she steals the mystery from thy keeping.

Thou art to me like my beloved maiden,
So frankly coy, so full of trembly confidences ;
Thy shadow scarce seems shade, thy pattering leaflets
Sprinkle their gathered sunshine o'er my senses,
And Nature gives me all her summer confidences.

Whether my heart with hope or sorrow tremble,
Thou sympathizest still ; wild and unquiet,
I fling me down ; thy ripple, like a river,
Flows valleyward, where calmness is, and by it
My heart is floated down into the land of quiet.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH.



I SAT one evening in my room,
In that sweet hour of twilight
When blended thoughts, half light, half gloom,
Throng through the spirit's skylight ;
The flames by fits curled round the bars,
Or up the chimney crinkled,
While embers dropped like falling stars,
And in the ashes tinkled.

I sat and mused ; the fire burned low,
And, o'er my senses stealing,
Crept something of the ruddy glow
That bloomed on wall and ceiling ;

My pictures (they are very few, —
The heads of ancient wise men)
Smoothed down their knotted fronts, and grew
As rosy as excisemen.

My antique high-backed Spanish chair
Felt thrills through wood and leather,
That had been strangers since whilere,
'Mid Andalusian heather,
The oak that made its sturdy frame
His happy arms stretched over
The ox whose fortunate hide became
The bottom's polished cover.

It came out in that famous bark
That brought our sires intrepid,
Capacious as another ark
For furniture decrepid; —
For, as that saved of bird and beast
A pair for propagation,
So has the seed of these increased
And furnished half the nation.

50500B

Kings sit, they say, in slippery seats ;
 But those slant precipices
Of ice the northern voyager meets
 Less slippery are than this is ;
To cling therein would pass the wit
 Of royal man or woman,
And whatsoe'er can stay in it
 Is more or less than human.

My wonder, then, was not unmixed
 With merciful suggestion,
When, as my roving eyes grew fixed
 Upon the chair in question,
I saw its trembling arms inclose
 A figure grim and rusty,
Whose doublet plain and plainer hose
 Were something worn and dusty.

Now even such men as Nature forms
 Merely to fill the street with,
Once turned to ghosts by hungry worms,
 Are serious things to meet with ;

Your penitent spirits are no jokes,
And, though I 'm not averse to
A quiet shade, even they are folks
One cares not to speak first to.

Who knows, thought I, but he has come,
By Charon kindly ferried,
To tell me of a mighty sum
Behind my wainscot buried?
There is a buccaneerish air
About that garb outlandish —
Just then the ghost drew up his chair
And said, " My name is Standish.

" I come from Plymouth, deadly bored
With toasts, and songs, and speeches,
As long and flat as my old sword,
As threadbare as my breeches :
They understand us Pilgrims ! they,
Smooth men with rosy faces,
Strength's knots and gnarls all pared away,
And varnish in their places !

“ We had some toughness in our grain,
The eye to rightly see us is
Not just the one that lights the brain
Of drawing-room Tyrtauses :
They talk about their Pilgrim blood,
Their birthright high and holy ! —
A mountain-stream that ends in mud
Methinks is melancholy.

“ He had stiff knees, the Puritan,
That were not good at bending ;
The homespun dignity of man
He thought was worth defending ;
He did not, with his pinchbeck ore,
His country's shame forgotten,
Gild Freedom's coffin o'er and o'er,
When all within was rotten.

“ These loud ancestral boasts of yours,
How can they else than vex us ?
Where were your dinner orators
When slavery grasped at Texas ?

Dumb on his knees was every one
That now is bold as Cæsar, —
Mere pegs to hang an office on
Such stalwart men as these are.”

“ Good Sir,” I said, “ you seem much stirred ;
The sacred compromises —— ” .
“ Now God confound the dastard word !
My gall thereat arises :
Northward it hath this sense alone,
That you, your conscience blinding,
Shall bow your fool’s nose to the stone,
When slavery feels like grinding.

“ ’T is shame to see such painted sticks
In Vane’s and Winthrop’s places,
To see your spirit of Seventy-six
Drag humbly in the traces,
With slavery’s lash upon her back,
And herds of office-holders
To shout applause, as, with a crack,
It peels her patient shoulders.

“ *We* forefathers to such a rout ! —
 No, by my faith in God’s word ! ”
Half rose the ghost, and half drew out
 The ghost of his old broadsword,
Then thrust it slowly back again,
 And said, with reverent gesture,
“ No, Freedom, no ! blood should not stain
 The hem of thy white vesture.

“ I feel the soul in me draw near
 The mount of prophesying ;
In this bleak wilderness I hear
 A John the Baptist crying ;
Far in the east I see upleap
 The streaks of first forewarning,
And they who sowed the light shall reap
 The golden sheaves of morning.

“ Child of our travail and our woe,
 Light in our day of sorrow,
Through my rapt spirit I foreknow
 The glory of thy morrow ;

I hear great steps, that through the shade
 Draw nigher still and nigher, ●
And voices call like that which bade
 The prophet come up higher ”

I looked, no form mine eyes could find,
 I heard the red cock crowing,
And through my window-chinks the wind
 A dismal tune was blowing ;
Thought I, My neighbour Buckingham
 Hath somewhat in him gritty,
Some Pilgrim-stuff that hates all sham,
 And he will print my ditty.

ON THE CAPTURE OF CERTAIN FUGITIVE
SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON.

Look on who will in apathy, and stifle they who
can,
The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that make man
truly man ;
Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up with interest
or with ease
Consent to hear with quiet pulse of loathsome deeds
like these !

I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy
breast
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me
rest ;

And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the
tame,
'T is but my Bay-State dialect, — our fathers spake the
same !

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on
stone
To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and
gone,
While we look coldly on, and see law-shielded ruffians
slay
The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of
to-day !

Are we pledged to craven silence ? O, fling it to the
wind,
The parchment wall that 'bars us from the least of
human kind, —
That makes us cringe, and temporize, and dumbly stand
at rest,
While Pity's burning flood of words is red-hot in the
breast !

Though we break our fathers' promise, we have nobler
duties first ;
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most ac-
cursed ;
Man is more than Constitutions ; better rot beneath the
sod,
Than be true to Church and State while we are doubly
false to God !

We owe allegiance to the State ; but deeper, truer,
more,
To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's
core ;—
Our country claims our fealty ; we grant it so, but
then
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us
men.

He 's true to God who 's true to man ; wherever wrong
is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-behold-
ing sun,

That wrong is also done to us ; and they are slaves
 most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all
 their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being
 free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or
 sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye
 will,
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric
 thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye cannot keep
 apart,
With all your craft of tyranny, the human heart from
 heart :
When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay State's iron
 shore,
The word went forth that slavery should one day be no
 more.

Out from the land of bondage 't is decreed our slaves
shall go,

And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pharaoh ;

If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's of yore,

Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose surges are
of gore.

'T is ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to
win

Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to
sin ;

But if man before his duty with a listless spirit stands,

Ere long the Great Avenger takes the work from out
his hands.

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES T. TORREY.



Woe worth the hour when it is crime
To plead the poor dumb bondman's cause,
When all that makes the heart sublime,
The glorious throbs that conquer time,
Are traitors to our cruel laws!

He strove among God's suffering poor
One gleam of brotherhood to send;
The dungeon oped its hungry door
To give the truth one martyr more,
Then shut, — and here behold the end!

O Mother State ! when this was done,
 No pitying throe thy bosom gave ;
 Silent thou saw'st the death-shroud spun,
 And now thou givest to thy son
 The stranger's charity, — a grave.

Must it be thus for ever ? No !
 The hand of God sows not in vain ;
 Long sleeps the darkling seed below,
 The seasons come, and change, and go,
 And all the fields are deep with grain.

Although our brother lie asleep,
 Man's heart still struggles, still aspires ;
 His grave shall quiver yet, while deep
 Through the brave Bay State's pulses leap
 Her ancient energies and fires.

When hours like this the senses' gush
 Have stilled, and left the spirit room,
 It hears amid the eternal hush
 The swooping pinions' dreadful rush,
 That bring the vengeance and the doom ; —

Not man's brute vengeance, such as rends

What rivets man to man apart, —

God doth not so bring round his ends,

But waits the ripened time, and sends

His mercy to the oppressor's heart.

REMEMBERED MUSIC.

A FRAGMENT.

THICK-rushing, like an ocean vast
Of bisons the far prairie shaking,
The notes crowd heavily and fast
As surfs, one plunging while the last
Draws seaward from its foamy breaking.

Or in low murmurs they began,
Rising and rising momentarily,
As o'er a harp Æolian
A fitful breeze, until they ran
Up to a sudden ecstasy.

And then, like minute-drops of rain
 Ringing in water silverly,
They lingering dropped and dropped again,
Till it was almost like a pain
 To listen when the next would be.

1840.

SONG :

To M. L.

A LILY thou wast when I saw thee first,
 A lily-bud not opened quite,
 That hourly grew more pure and white,
By morning, and noontide, and evening nursed :
 In all of nature thou hadst thy share ;
 Thou wast waited on
 By the wind and sun ;
The rain and the dew for thee took care ;
It seemed thou never couldst be more fair.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,
 A lily-bud ; but, O, how strange,
 How full of wonder was the change,
When, ripe with all sweetness, thy full bloom burst !

How did the tears to my glad eyes start,
 When the woman-flower
 Reached its blossoming hour,
And I saw the warm deeps of thy golden heart!

Glad death may pluck thee, but never before
 The gold dust of thy bloom divine
 Hath dropped from thy heart into mine,
To quicken its faint germs of heaven'y lore ;
 For no breeze comes nigh thee but carries away
 Some impulses bright
 Of fragrance and light,
Which fall upon souls that are lone and astray,
To plant fruitful hopes of the flower of day.

TO THE DANDELION.



DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
 Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
 First pledge of blithesome May,
 Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
 High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
 An Eldorado in the grass have found,
 Which not the rich earth's ample round
 May match in wealth,—thou art more dear to me
 Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
 Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
 Nor wrinkled the lean brow
 Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease ;
 'T is the spring's largess, which she scatters now

To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
 Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy ;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime ;
 The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time :
 Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like, warm ravishment
 In the white lily's breezy tent,
His conquered Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass, —
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
 Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways, —
 Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, — of waters blue
 That from the distance sparkle through

Some woodland gap, — and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
 Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
 And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing
 With news from heaven, which he did bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
 Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
 Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
 Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

THE GHOST-SEER.



YE who, passing graves by night,
Glance not to the left nor right,
Lest a spirit should arise,
Cold and white, to freeze your eyes,
Some weak phantom, which your doubt
Shapes upon the dark without
From the dark within, a guess
At the spirit's deathlessness,
Which ye entertain with fear
In your self-built dungeon here,
Where ye sell your God-given lives
Just for gold to buy you gyves, —

Ye without a shudder meet,
In the city's noonday street,
Spirits sadder and more dread
Than from out the clay have fled,
Buried, beyond hope of light,
In the body's haunted night!

See ye not that woman pale?
There are bloodhounds on her trail!
Bloodhounds two, all gaunt and lean. —
For the soul their scent is keen, —
Want and Sin, and Sin is last, —
They have followed far and fast;
Want gave tongue, and, at her howl,
Sin awakened with a growl.
Ah, poor girl! she had a right
To a blessing from the light,
Title-deeds to sky and earth
God gave to her at her birth,
But, before they were enjoyed,
Poverty had made them void,

And had drunk the sunshine up
From all nature's ample cup,
Leaving her a first-born's share
In the dregs of darkness there.
Often, on the sidewalk bleak,
Hungry, all alone, and weak,
She has seen, in night and storm,
Rooms o'erflow with firelight warm,
Which, outside the window-glass,
Doubled all the cold, alas !
Till each ray that on her fell
Stabbed her like an icicle,
And she almost loved the wail
Of the bloodhounds on her trail.
Till the floor becomes her bier,
She shall feel their pantings near,
Close upon her very heels,
Spite of all the din of wheels ;
Shivering on her pallet poor,
She shall hear them at the door
Whine and scratch to be let in,
Sister bloodhounds, Want and Sin !

Hark ! that rustle of a dress,
Stiff with lavish costliness !
Here comes one whose cheek would flush
But to have her garment brush
'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin
Wove the weary broidery in,
Bending backward from her toil,
Lest her tears the silk might soil,
And, in midnight's chill and murk,
Stitched her life into the work,
Shaping from her bitter thought
Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,
Satirizing her despair
With the emblems woven there.

Little doth the wearer heed
Of the heart-break in the brede ;
A hyena by her side
Skulks, down-looking, — it is Pride.
He digs for her in the earth,
Where lie all her claims of birth,

With his foul paws rooting o'er
Some long-buried ancestor,
Who, perhaps, a statue won
By the ill deeds he had done,
By the innocent blood he shed,
By the desolation spread
Over happy villages,
Blotting out the smile of peace.
Round her heart and round her brain
Wealth hath linked a golden chain,
Which doth close and closer press
Heart and brain to narrowness.
Every morn and every night
She must bare that bosom white,
Which so thrillingly doth rise
'Neath its proud embroideries,
That its mere heave lets men know
How much whiter 't is than snow, —
She must bare it, and, unseen,
Suckle that hyena lean ; —
Ah ! the fountain's angel shrinks,
And forsakes it while he drinks !

There walks Judas, he who sold
Yesterday his Lord for gold,
Sold God's presence in his heart
For a proud step in the mart ;
He hath dealt in flesh and blood, —
At the bank his name is good,
At the bank, and only there,
'T is a marketable ware.
In his eyes that stealthy gleam
Was not learned of sky or stream,
But it has the cold, hard glint
Of new dollars from the mint.
Open now your spirit's eyes,
Look through that poor clay disguise
Which has thickened, day by day,
Till it keeps all light at bay,
And his soul in pitchy gloom
Gropes about its narrow tomb,
From whose dank and slimy walls
Drop by drop the horror falls.
Look ! a serpent lank and cold
Hugs his spirit fold on fold ;

From his heart, all day and night,
It doth suck God's blessed light.
Drink it will, and drink it must,
Till the cup holds naught but dust ;
All day long he hears it hiss,
Writhing in its fiendish bliss ;
All night long he sees its eyes
Flicker with foul ecstasies,
As the spirit ebbs away
Into the absorbing clay.

Who is he that skulks, afraid
Of the trust he has betrayed,
Shuddering if perchance a gleam
Of old nobleness should stream
Through the pent, unwholesome room,
Where his shrunk soul cowers in gloom, —
Spirit sad beyond the rest
By more instinct for the best ?
'T is a poet who was sent
For a bad world's punishment,

By compelling it to see
Golden glimpses of To Be,
By compelling it to hear
Songs that prove the angels near ;
Who was sent to be the tongue
Of the weak and spirit-wrung,
Whence the fiery-winged Despair
In men's shrinking eyes might flare.
'T is our hope doth fashion us
To base use or glorious :
He who might have been a lark
Of Truth's morning, from the dark
Raining down melodious hope
Of a freer, broader scope,
Aspirations, prophecies,
Of the spirit's full sunrise,
Chose to be a bird of night,
Which, with eyes refusing light,
Hooted from some hollow tree
Of the world's idolatry.
'T is his punishment to hear
Flutterings of pinions near,

And his own vain wings to feel
Drooping downward to his heel,
All their grace and import lost,
Burdening his weary ghost :
Ever walking by his side
He must see his angel guide,
Who at intervals doth turn
Looks on him so sadly stern,
With such ever-new surprise
Of hushed anguish in her eyes,
That it seems the light of day
From around him shrinks away,
Or drops blunted from the wall
Built around him by his fall.
Then the mountains, whose white peaks
Catch the morning's earliest streaks,
He must see, where prophets sit,
Turning east their faces lit,
Whence, with footsteps beautiful,
To the earth, yet dim and dull,
They the gladsome tidings bring
Of the sunlight's hastening :

Never can those hills of bliss
Be o'erclimbed by feet like his !

But enough ! O, do not dare
From the next the veil to tear,
Woven of station, trade, or dress,
More obscene than nakedness,
Wherewith plausible culture drapes
Fallen Nature's myriad shapes !
Let us rather love to mark
How the unextinguished spark
Will shine through the thin disguise
Of our customs, pomps, and lies,
And, not seldom blown to flame,
Vindicate its ancient claim.

THE MORNING-GLORY.



WE wreathed about our darling's head the morning-glory
bright;
Her little face looked out beneath, so full of life and
light,
So lit as with a sunrise, that we could only say,
She is the morning-glory true, and her poor types are
they.

So always from that happy time we called her by their
name,
And very fitting did it seem, for, sure as morning came

Behind her cradle-bars she smiled to catch the first faint
ray,
As from the trellis smiles the flower and opens to the
day.

But not so beautiful they rear their airy cups of
blue,
As turned her sweet eyes to the light brimmed with
sleep's tender dew ;
And not so close their tendrils fine round their supports
are thrown,
As those dear arms whose outstretched plea clasped all
hearts to her own.

We used to think how she had come, even as comes the
flower,
The last and perfect added gift to crown love's morning
hour,
And how in her was imaged forth the love we could not
say,
As on the little dew-drops round shines back the heart
of day.

We never could have thought, O God, that she must
wither up,
Almost before a day was flown, like the morning-glory's
cup ;
We never thought to see her droop her fair and noble
head,
Till she lay stretched before our eyes, wilted, and cold,
and dead.

The morning-glory's blossoming will soon be coming
round,
We see their rows of heart-shaped leaves upspringing
from the ground ;
The tender things the winter killed renew again their
birth,
But the glory of our morning has passed away from
earth.

O Earth, in vain our aching eyes stretch over thy green
plain !
Too harsh thy dews, too gross thine air, her spirit to
sustain, —

But up in groves of Paradise full surely we shall
see
Our morning-glory beautiful twine round our dear Lord's
knee.

STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS.



I.

SOME sort of heart I know is hers, —
I chanced to feel her pulse one night ;
A brain she has that never errs,
And yet is never nobly right ;
It does not leap to great results,
But, in some corner out of sight,
Suspects a spot of latent blight,
And, o'er the impatient infinite,
She bargains, haggles, and consults.

Her eye, — it seems a chemic test,
 And drops upon you like an acid ;
It bites you with unconscious zest,
 So clear and bright, so coldly placid ;
It holds you quietly aloof,
 It holds, — and yet it does not win you ;
It merely puts you to the proof
 And sorts what qualities are in you ;
It smiles, but never brings you nearer,
 It lights, — her nature draws not nigh ;
'T is but that yours is growing clearer
 To her assays ; — yes, try and try,
 You 'll get no deeper than her eye.

There, you are classified : she 's gone
 Far, far away into herself ;
Each with its Latin label on,
Your poor components, one by one,
 Are laid upon their proper shelf
In her compact and ordered mind,
And what of you is left behind
Is no more to her than the wind ;

In that clear brain, which, day and night,
 No movement of the heart e'er jostles,
Her friends are ranged on left and right, —
Here, silex, hornblende, sienite,
 There, animal remains and fossils.

And yet, O subtile analyst,
 That canst each property detect
Of mood or grain, that canst untwist
 Each tangled skein of intellect,
And with thy scalpel eyes lay bare
Each mental nerve more fine than air, —
 O brain exact, that in thy scales
Canst weigh the sun and never err,
 For once thy patient science fails,
 One problem still defies thy art ; —
Thou never canst compute for her
The distance and diameter
 Of any simple human heart.

II.

HEAR him but speak, and you will feel
The shadows of the Portico
Over your tranquil spirit steal,
To modulate all joy and woe
To one subdued, subduing glow ;
Above our squabbling business-hours,
Like Phidian Jove's, his beauty lowers,
His nature satirizes ours ;
A form and front of Attic grace,
He shames the higgling market-place,
And dwarfs our more mechanic powers.

What throbbing verse can fitly render
That face, — so pure, so trembling-tender ?
Sensation glimmers through its rest,
It speaks unmanacled by words,
As full of motion as a nest
That palpitates with unfledged birds ;
'T is likest to Bethesda's stream,
Forewarned through all its thrilling springs,

White with the angel's coming gleam,
And rippled with his fanning wings.

Hear him unfold his plots and plans,
And larger destinies seem man's ;

You conjure from his glowing face
The omen of a fairer race ;
With one grand trope he boldly spans
The gulf wherein so many fall,
'Twi't possible and actual ;
His first swift word, talaria-shod,
Exuberant with conscious God,
Out of the choir of planets blots
The present earth with all its spots.

Himself unshaken as the sky,
His words, like whirlwinds, spin on high
Systems and creeds pellmell together ;
'T is strange as to a deaf man's eye,
While trees uprooted splinter by,
The dumb turmoil of stormy weather ;
Less of iconoclast than shaper,

His spirit, safe behind the reach
Of the tornado of his speech,
Burns calmly as a glowworm's taper.

So great in speech, but, ah! in act
So overrun with vermin troubles,
The coarse, sharp-cornered, ugly fact
Of life collapses all his bubbles :
Had he but lived in Plato's day,
He might, unless my fancy errs,
Have shared that golden voice's sway
O'er barefooted philosophers.
Our nipping climate hardly suits
The ripening of ideal fruits ;
His theories vanquish us all summer,
But winter makes him dumb and dumber ;
To see him 'mid life's needful things
Is something painfully bewildering ;
He seems an angel with clipt wings
Tied to a mortal wife and children,
And by a brother seraph taken
In the act of eating eggs and bacon.

Like a clear fountain, his desire
 Exults and leaps toward the light,
In every drop it says "Aspire!"
 Striving for more ideal height;
And as the fountain, falling thence,
 Crawls baffled through the common gutter,
So, from his speech's eminence,
He shrinks into the present tense,
 Unkinged by foolish bread and butter.

Yet smile not, worldling, for in deeds
 Not all of life that 's brave and wise is;
He strews an ampler future's seeds,
 'T is your fault if no harvest rises;
Smooth back the sneer; for is it naught
 That all he is and has is Beauty's?
By soul the soul's gains must be wrought,
The Actual claims our coarser thought,
 The Ideal hath its higher duties.

ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO.



CAN this be thou who, lean and pale,
With such immitigable eye
Didst look upon those writhing souls in bale,
And note each vengeance, and pass by
Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance
Cast backward one forbidden glance,
And saw Francesca, with child's glee,
Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee
And with proud hands control its fiery prance ?

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round brow,
And eye remote, that inly sees
Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now
In some sea-lulled Hesperides,
Thou movest through the jarring street,
Secluded from the noise of feet
By her gift-blossom in thy hand,
Thy branch of palm from Holy Land ;—
No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips
That prophecies the coming doom,
The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the eclipse
Notches the perfect disk with gloom ;
A something that would banish thee,
And thine untamed pursuer be,
From men and their unworthy fates,
Though Florence had not shut her gates,
And grief had loosed her clutch and let thee free.

Ah ! he who follows fearlessly
The beckonings of a poet-heart

Shall wander, and without the world's decree,
A banished man in field and mart ;
Harder than Florence' walls the bar
Which with deaf sternness holds him far
From home and friends, till death's release,
And makes his only prayer for peace,
Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong war !

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD.



DEATH never came so nigh to me before,
Nor showed me his mild face : oft had I mused
Of calm and peace and deep forgetfulness,
Of folded hands, closed eyes, and heart at rest,
And slumber sound beneath a flowery turf,
Of faults forgotten, and an inner place
Kept sacred for us in the heart of friends ;
But these were idle fancies, satisfied
With the mere husk of this great mystery,
And dwelling in the outward shows of things.
Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams,
Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth
Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to bloom,
With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content :

'T is sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God
The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed.

True is it that Death's face seems stern and cold,
When he is sent to summon those we love,
But all God's angels come to us disguised ;
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks,
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the front of God.
With every anguish of our earthly part
The spirit's sight grows clearer ; this was meant
When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay.
Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent
To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.
He flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest, —
Only the fallen spirit knocks at that, —
But to benigner regions beckons us,
To destinies of more rewarded toil.

In the hushed chamber, sitting by the dead,
It grates on us to hear the flood of life
Whirl rustling onward, senseless of our loss.
The bee hums on ; around the blossomed vine
Whirs the light humming-bird ; the cricket chirps ;
The locust's shrill alarum stings the ear ;
Hard by, the cock shouts lustily ; from farm to farm,
His cheery brothers, telling of the sun,
Answer, till far away the joyance dies :
We never knew before how God had filled
The summer air with happy living sounds ;
All round us seems an overplus of life,
And yet the one dear heart lies cold and still.
It is most strange, when the great miracle
Hath for our sakes been done, when we have had
Our inwardest experience of God,
When with his presence still the room expands,
And is awed after him, that naught is changed,
That Nature's face looks unacknowledging,
And the mad world still dances heedless on
After its butterflies, and gives no sign.
'T is hard at first to see it all aright ;

In vain Faith blows her trump to summon back
Her scattered troop ; yet, through the clouded glass
Of our own bitter tears, we learn to look
Undazzled on the kindness of God's face ;
Earth is too dark, and Heaven alone shines through.

It is no little thing, when a fresh soul
And a fresh heart, with their unmeasured scope
For good, not gravitating earthward yet,
But circling in diviner periods,
Are sent into the world, — no little thing,
When this unbounded possibility
Into the outer silence is withdrawn.
Ah, in this world, where every guiding thread
Ends suddenly in the one sure centre, death,
The visionary hand of Might-have-been
Alone can fill Desire's cup to the brim !

How changed, dear friend, are thy part and thy
child's !

He bends above *thy* cradle now, or holds
His warning finger out to be thy guide ;

Thou art the nursling now ; he watches thee
Slow learning, one by one, the secret things
Which are to him used sights of every day ;
He smiles to see thy wondering glances con
The grass and pebbles of the spirit-world,
To thee miraculous ; and he will teach
Thy knees their due observances of prayer.

Children are God's apostles, day by day
Sent forth to preach of love, and hope, and peace ;
Nor hath thy babe his mission left undone.
To me, at least, his going hence hath given
Serener thoughts and nearer to the skies,
And opened a new fountain in my heart
For thee, my friend, and all : and, O, if Death
More near approaches meditates, and clasps
Even now some dearer, more reluctant hand,
God, strengthen thou my faith, that I may see
That 't is thine angel, who, with loving haste,
Unto the service of the inner shrine
Doth waken thy beloved with a kiss !

EURYDICE.



HEAVEN'S cup held down to me I drain,
The sunshine mounts and spurs my brain ;
Bathing in grass, with thirsty eye
I suck the last drop of the sky ;
With each hot sense I draw to the lees
The quickening out-door influences,
And empty to each radiant comer
A supernaculum of summer :
Not, Bacchus, all thy grosser juice
Could bring enchantment so profuse,
Though for its press each grape-bunch had
The white feet of an Oread.

Through our coarse art gleam, now and then;
The features of angelic men ;
'Neath the lewd Satyr's veiling paint
Gloweth forth the Sibyl, Muse, or Saint ;
The dauber's botch no more obscures
The mighty Master's portraitures.
And who can say what luckier beam
The hidden glory shall redeem,
For what chance clod the soul may wait
To stumble on its nobler fate,
Or why, to his unwarned abode,
Still by surprises comes the God ?
Some moment, nailed on sorrow's cross,
May mediate a whole youth's loss,
Some windfall joy, we know not whence,
Redeem a lifetime's rash expense,
And, suddenly wise, the soul may mark,
Stripped of their simulated dark,
Mountains of gold that pierce the sky,
Girdling its valleyed poverty.

I feel ye, childhood's hopes, return,
With olden heats my pulses burn, —

Mine be the self-forgetting sweep,
The torrent impulse swift and wild,
Wherewith Taghkanic's rockborn child
Dares gloriously the dangerous leap,
And, in his sky-descended mood,
Transmutes each drop of sluggish blood,
By touch of bravery's simple wand,
To amethyst and diamond,
Proving himself no bastard slip,
But the true granite-cradled one,
Nursed with the rock's primeval drip,
The cloud-embracing mountain's son !

Prayer breathed in vain ! no wish's sway
Rebuilds the vanished yesterday ;
For plated wares of Sheffield stamp
We gave the old Aladdin's lamp ;
'T is we are changed ; ah, whither went
That undesigned abandonment,
That wise, unquestioning content,
Which could erect its microcosm
Out of a weed's neglected blossom,

Could call up Arthur and his peers
By some low moss's clump of spears,
Or, in its shingle trireme launched,
Where Charles in some green inlet branched,
Could venture for the golden fleece
And dragon-watched Hesperides,
Or, from its ripple-shattered fate,
Ulysses' chances recreate ?
When, heralding life's every phase,
There glowed a goddess-veiling haze,
A plenteous, forewarning grace,
Like that more tender dawn that flies
Before the full moon's ample rise ?
Methinks thy parting glory shines
Through yonder grove of singing pines ;
At that elm-vista's end I trace
Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,
Eurydice ! Eurydice !
The tremulous leaves repeat to me
Eurydice ! Eurydice !
No gloomier Orcus swallows thee
Than the unclouded sunset's glow ;
Thine is at least Elysian woe ;

Thou hast Good's natural decay,
And fadest like a star away
Into an atmosphere whose shine
With fuller day o'ermasters thine,
Entering defeat as 't were a shrine ;
For us, — we turn life's diary o'er
To find but one word, — Nevermore.

SHE CAME AND WENT.



As a twig trembles, which a bird
Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,
So is my memory thrilled and stirred ; —
I only know she came and went.

As clasps some laké, by gusts unriven,
The blue dome's measureless content,
So my soul held that moment's heaven ; —
I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps
The orchards full of bloom and scent,
So clove her May my wintry sleeps ; —
I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,
Through the low doorway of my tent ;
The tent is struck, the vision stays ; —
I only know she came and went.

O, when the room grows slowly dim,
And life's last oil is nearly spent,
One gush of light these eyes will brim,
Only to think she came and went.

TO W. L. GARRISON.

“Sometime afterward, it was reported to me by the city officers, that they had ferreted out the paper and its editor ; that his office was an obscure hole, his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters a few very insignificant persons of all colors.” — *H. G. Otis's Letter.*

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,
 Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man ;
 The place was dark, unfurnished, and mean ;—
 Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly ; surely no man yet
 Put lever to the heavy world with less :
 What need of help ? He knew how types were set,
 He had a dauntless spirit, and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,
The compact nucleus, round which systems grow ;
Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,
And whirls impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth ! O Freedom ! how are ye still born
In the rude stable, in the manger nursed !
What humble hands unbar those gates of morn
Through which the splendors of the New Day burst !

What ! shall one monk, scarce known beyond his cell,
Front Rome's far-reaching bolts, and scorn her frown ?
Brave Luther answered YES ; that thunder's swell
Rocked Europe, and discharmed the triple crown.

Whatever can be known of earth we know,
Sneered Europe's wise men, in their snail-shells curled ;
No, said one man in Genoa, and that no
Out of the dark created this New World.

Who is it will not dare himself to trust ?
Who is it hath not strength to stand alone ?

Who is it thwarts and bilks the inward MUST ?

He and his works, like sand, from earth are blown.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here !

See one straightforward conscience put in pawn
To win a world ; see the obedient sphere
By bravery's simple gravitation drawn !

Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,

And by the Present's lips repeated still,
In our own single manhood to be bold,
Fortressed in conscience and impregnable will ?

We stride the river daily at its spring,

Nor, in our childish thoughtlessness, foresee
What myriad vassal streams shall tribute bring,
How like an equal it shall greet the sea.

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,

Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain !
Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,
Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain.

THE CHANGELING.



I HAD a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,
That I, by the force of nature,
Might in some dim wise divine
The depth of his infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair ;

For it was as wavy as
And as many changes
As the shadows of sun
On the yellow bed

To what can I liken
Upon me, her knee
How it leaped from her
And dimpled her waist
Till her outstretched hand
And I almost seemed
The very heart of her
Sending sun through

She had been with us
And it hardly seemed
When a troop of wanderers
Stole my little daughter
Or perhaps those heaven
But loosed the hamper
And when they had opened
My little bird used

But they left in her stead a changeling,
 A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
 And smiles as she never smiled :
When I wake in the morning, I see it
 Where she always used to lie,
And I feel as weak as a violet
 Alone 'neath the awful sky ;

As weak, yet as trustful also ;
 For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful Nature
 Still worked for the love of me ;
Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,
 Rain falls, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
 A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
 I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
 And bliss it upon my breast ;

Yet it lies in my little one's cradle
And sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she 's gone to
Transfigures its golden hair.

AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE.



WHAT visionary tints the year puts on,
When falling leaves falter through motionless air
Or numbly cling and shiver to be gone!
How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,
As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills
The bowl between me and those distant hills,
And smiles and shakes abroad her misty, tremulous hair!

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,
Making me poorer in my poverty,
But mingles with my senses and my heart;
My own projected spirit seems to me

In her own reverie the world to steep ;

'T is she that waves to sympathetic sleep,
Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,
Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,
Each into each, the hazy distances !
The softened season all the landscape charms ;
Those hills, my native village that embay,
In waves of dreamier purple roll away,
And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee
Close at my side ; far distant sound the leaves ;
The fields seem fields of dream, where Memory
Wanders like gleaning Ruth ; and as the sheaves
Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye
Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,
So tremble and seem remote all things the sense re-
ceives.

The cock's shrill trump, that tells of scattered corn,
Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,

Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,
Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits ;
Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails ;
Silently overhead the henhawk sails,
With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,
Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer ;
The squirrel, on the shingly shagbark's bough,
Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,
Then drops his nut, and, with a chipping bound,
Whisks to his winding fastness underground ;
The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmos-
phere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar-shadows
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss ; the ploughman's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed
meadows ;
The single crow a single caw lets fall ;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn 's here, and Winter soon will be,
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and lady-like of trees,
Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,
And hints at her foregone gentilities
With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves ;
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,
As one who prouder to a falling fortune cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,
Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,
With distant eye broods over other sights,
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,
And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,
After the first betrayal of the frost,
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky ;
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,
To the faint Summer, beggared now and old,
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly
And sadly, breaking not the general hush ;
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush ;
All round the wood's edge creeps the skirting
blaze
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,
Ere the rain falls, the cautious farmer burns his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,
Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks intertwine
Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,
The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed,
weaves
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves ;
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling boundary,
Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the ploughboy's
foot,
Who, with each sense shut fast except the eye,
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to shoot,

The woodbine up the elm's straight stem aspires,
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal fires ;
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak stands mute.

Below, the Charles — a stripe of nether sky,
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying
by,
Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,
Then spreading out, at his next turn beyond,
A silver circle, like an inland pond —
Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and
green.

Dear marshes ! vain to him the gift of sight
Who cannot in their various incomes share,
From every season drawn, of shade and light,
Who sees in them but levels brown and bare ;
Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free
On them its largess of variety,
For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders
rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of green,
O'er which the light winds run with glimmering
feet ;

Here, yellower stripes track out the creek unseen,
There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches meet ;
And purpler stains show where the blossoms crowd,
As if the silent shadow of a cloud
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,
Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,
Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge ;
Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,
Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,
And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run
Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

In Summer 't is a blithesome sight to see,
As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,
The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,
Their sharp scythes panting through the thickset
grass ;

Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,
Their nooning take, while one begins to sing
A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of
brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,
Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops
Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,
And 'twixt the winrows most demurely drops,
A decorous bird of business, who provides
For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,
And looks from right to left, a farmer 'mid his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,
But saddens not ; they still show merrier tints,
Though sober russet seems to cover all ;
When the first sunshine through their dew-drops
glints,
Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,
Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,
As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy
prints.

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,
Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,
While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,
Glow opposite ; — the marshes drink their fill
And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade
Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the
shade,
Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simond's darkening
hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,
Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,
And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts,
While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,
Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,
And until bed-time plays with his desire,
Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates ;—

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright
With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,
By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,
'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,

Giving a pretty emblem of the day
When guiltier arms in light shall melt away,
And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's
cramping mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river
Twice every day creates on either side
Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they
shiver
In grass-arched channels to the sun denied ;
High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,
The silvered flats gleam frostily below,
Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

But, crowned in turn by vying seasons three,
Their winter halo hath a fuller ring ;
This glory seems to rest immovably, —
The others were too fleet and vanishing ;
When the hid tide is at its highest flow,
O'er marsh and stream one breathless trance of
snow
With brooding fulness awes and hushes every thing.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak wind,
As pale as formal candles lit by day ;
Gropes to the sea the river dumb and blind ;
The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the storm in
play,
Show pearly breakers combing o'er their lee,
White crests as of some just enchanted sea,
Checked in their maddest leap and hanging poised mid-
way.

But when the eastern blow, with rain aslant,
From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling plains
Drives in his wallowing herds of billows gaunt,
And the roused Charles remembers in his veins
Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of frost,
That tyrannous silence on the shores is tost
In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device,
With leaden pools between or gullies bare,
The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge of ice ;
No life, no sound, to break the grim despair,

Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges stiff
Down crackles riverward some thaw-sapped cliff,
Or when the close-wedged fields of ice crunch here and
there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured scenes
To that whose pastoral calm before me lies :
Here nothing harsh or rugged intervenes ;
The early evening with her misty dyes
Smooths off the ravelled edges of the nigh,
Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,
And tones the landscape down, and soothes the wearied
eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear to me,
Though higher change's waves each day are seen,
Whelming fields famed in boyhood's history,
Sanding with houses the diminished green ;
There, in red brick, which softening time defies,
Stand square and stiff the Muses' factories ;—
How with my life knit up is every well-known scene !

Flow on, dear river ! not alone you flow
To outward sight, and through your marshes wind ;
Fed from the mystic springs of long-ago,
Your twin flows silent through my world of mind :
Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray !
Before my inner sight ye stretch away,
And will for ever, though these fleshly eyes grow
blind.

Beyond that hillock's house-bespotted swell,
Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,
Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell,
Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,
Where dust and mud the equal year divide,
There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died,
Transfiguring street and shop with his illumined gaze.

Virgilium vidi tantum, — I have seen
But as a boy, who looks alike on all,
That misty hair, that fine Undine-like mien,
Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest call ; —

Ah, dear old homestead ! count it to thy fame
That thither many times the Painter came ; —
One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree and
tall.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's glow, —
Our only sure possession is the past ;
The village blacksmith died a month ago,
And dim to me the forge's roaring blast ;
Soon fire-new mediævals we shall see
Oust the black smithy from its chestnut tree,
And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive green and
vast.

How many times, prouder than king on throne,
Loosed from the village school-dame's A-s and B-s,
Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,
And watched the pent volcano's red increase,
Then paused to see the ponderous sledge, brought
down
By that hard arm voluminous and brown,
From the white iron swarm its golden vanishing bees.

Dear native town! whose choking elms each year
With eddyng dust before their time turn gray,
Pining for rain, — to me thy dust is dear ;
It glorifies the eve of summer day,
And when the westering sun half-sunken burns,
The mote-thick air to deepest orange turns,
The westward horseman rides through clouds of gold
away,

So palpable, I 've seen those unshorn few,
The six old willows at the causey's end,
(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed nor drew,)
Through this dry mist their checkering shadows send,
Striped, here and there, with many a long-drawn
thread,
Where streamed through leafy chinks the trem-
bling red,
Past which, in one bright trail, the hangbird's flashes
blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that e'er,
Beneath the awarded crown of victory,

Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer ;
Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three,
Yet *collegisse juvat*, I am glad
That here what colleging was mine I had, —
It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee !

Nearer art thou than simply native earth,
My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie ;
A closer claim thy soil may well put forth,
Something of kindred more than sympathy ;
For in thy bounds I reverently laid away
That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,
That title I seemed to have in earth and sea and sky,

That portion of my life more choice to me
(Though brief, yet in itself so round and whole)
Than all the imperfect residue can be ; —
The Artist saw his statue of the soul
Was perfect ; so, with one regretful stroke,
The earthen model into fragments broke,
And without her the impoverished seasons roll.

THE PIONEER.



WHAT man would live confined with brick and stone,
Imprisoned from the influences of air,
And cramped with selfish landmarks everywhere,
When all before him stretches, furrowless and lone,
The unmapped prairie none can fence or own?

What man would read and read the selfsame faces,
And, like the marbles which the windmill grinds,
Rub smooth for ever with the same smooth minds,
This year retracing last year's, every year's, dull traces,
When there are woods and un-man-stified places?

What man o'er one old thought would pore and pore,
Shut, like a book, between its covers thin
For every fool to leave his dog's-ears in,
When solitude is his, and God for evermore,
Just for the opening of a paltry door ?

What man would watch life's oozy element
Creep Letheward for ever, when he might
Down some great river drift beyond men's sight,
To where the undethroned forest's royal tent
Broods with its hush o'er half a continent ?

What man with men would push and altercate,
Piecing out crooked means for crooked ends,
When he can have the skies and woods for friends,
Snatch back the rudder of his undismantled fate,
And in himself be ruler, church, and state ?

Cast leaves and feathers rot in last year's nest,
The winged brood, flown thence, new dwellings plan ;
The serf of his own Past is not a man ;
To change and change is life, to move and never rest ;—
Not what we are, but what we hope, is best.

The wild, free woods make no man halt or blind ;
Cities rob men of eyes and hands and feet,
Patching one whole of many incomplete ;
The general preys upon the individual mind,
And each alone is helpless as the wind.

Each man is some man's servant ; every soul
Is by some other's presence quite discrowned ;
Each owes the next through all the imperfect round,
Yet not with mutual help ; each man is his own goal,
And the whole earth must stop to pay his toll.

Here, life the undiminished man demands ;
New faculties stretch out to meet new wants ;
What Nature asks, that Nature also grants ;
Here, man is lord, not drudge, of eyes and feet and hands,
And to his life is knit with hourly bands.

Come out, then, from the old thoughts and old ways,
Before you harden to a crystal cold
Which the new life can shatter, but not mould ;
Freedom for you still waits, still, looking backward, stays,
But widens still the irretrievable space.

LONGING.



Of all the myriad moods of mind
 That through the soul come thronging,
 Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
 So beautiful, as Longing?
 The thing we long for, that we are
 For one transcendent moment,
 Before the Present poor and bare
 Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,
 Glows down the wished Ideal,
 And Longing moulds in clay what Life
 Carves in the marble Real;
 To let the new life in, we know,
 Desire must ope the portal;—

Perhaps the longing to be so
Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will
With our poor earthward striving ;
We quench it that we may be still
Content with merely living ;
But, would we learn that heart's full scope
Which we are hourly wronging,
Our lives must climb from hope to hope
And realize our longing.

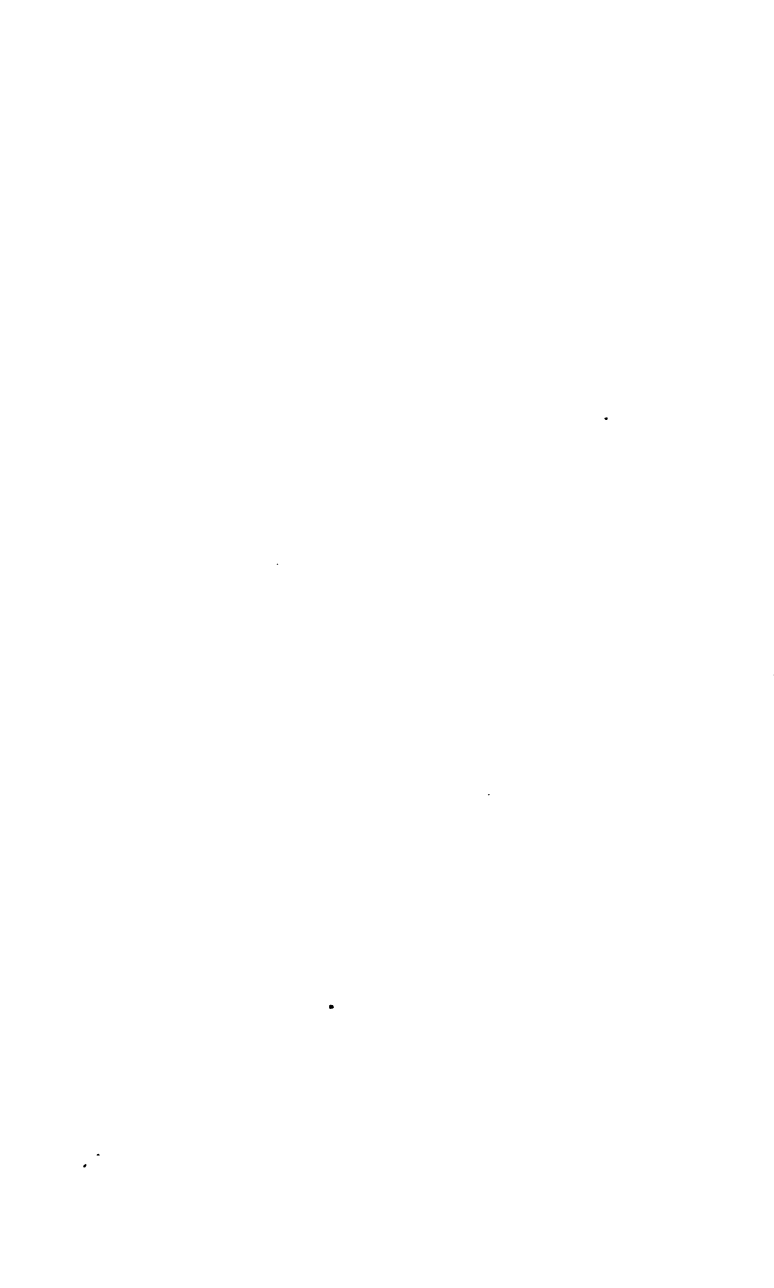
Ah ! let us hope that to our praise
Good God not only reckons
The moments when we tread his ways,
But when the spirit beckons, —
That some slight good is also wrought
Beyond self-satisfaction,
When we are simply good in thought,
How'er we fail in action.

THE VISION
OF
SIR LAUNFAL.



PART FIRST.

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PRELUDE.



OVER his keys the musing organist,
 Beginning doubtfully and far away,
 First lets his fingers wander as they list,
 And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay :
 Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
 Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
 First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
 Along the wavering vista of his dream.



Not only around our infancy
 Doth heaven with all its splendors lie ;
 Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
 We Sinais climb and know it not ;

Over our manhood bend the skies ;
 Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies ;
 With our faint hearts the mountain strives ,
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
 Waits with its benedicite ;
And to our age's drowsy blood
 Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us ;
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
 We bargain for the graves we lie in ;
At the Devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold ;
 For a cap and belts our lives we pay,
Bubbles we earn with a whole soul's tasking :
 'T is heaven alone that is given away,
'T is only God may be had for the asking ;
There is no price set on the lavish summer,
And June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June ?

Then, if ever, come perfect days ;

Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays :

Whether we look, or whether we listen,

We hear life murmur, or see it glisten ;

Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and towers,

And, grasping blindly above it for light,

Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers ;

The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys ;

The cowslip startles in meadows green,

The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,

And there 's never a leaf or a blade too mean

To be some happy creature's palace ;

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,

And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives ;

His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,

And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings ;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebb'd away
Comes flooding back, with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay ;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God so wills it ;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'T is enough for us now that the leaves are green ;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell ;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing ;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by ;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack ;

We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing, —
And hark ! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing !

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how ;
Every thing is happy now,
Every thing is upward striving ;
'T is as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue, —
'T is the natural way of living :
Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake ;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache ;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow ?

PART FIRST.

I.

“ My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail ;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep ;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew.”

Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drownd the cattle up to their knees,
 The little birds sang as if it were
 The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees :
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray ;
'T was the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree ;
Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied ;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though round it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight ;
 Green and broad was every tent,
 And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth : so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart ;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart ;

The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

v.

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate ;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came,
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor did shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall ;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn, —
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

vi.

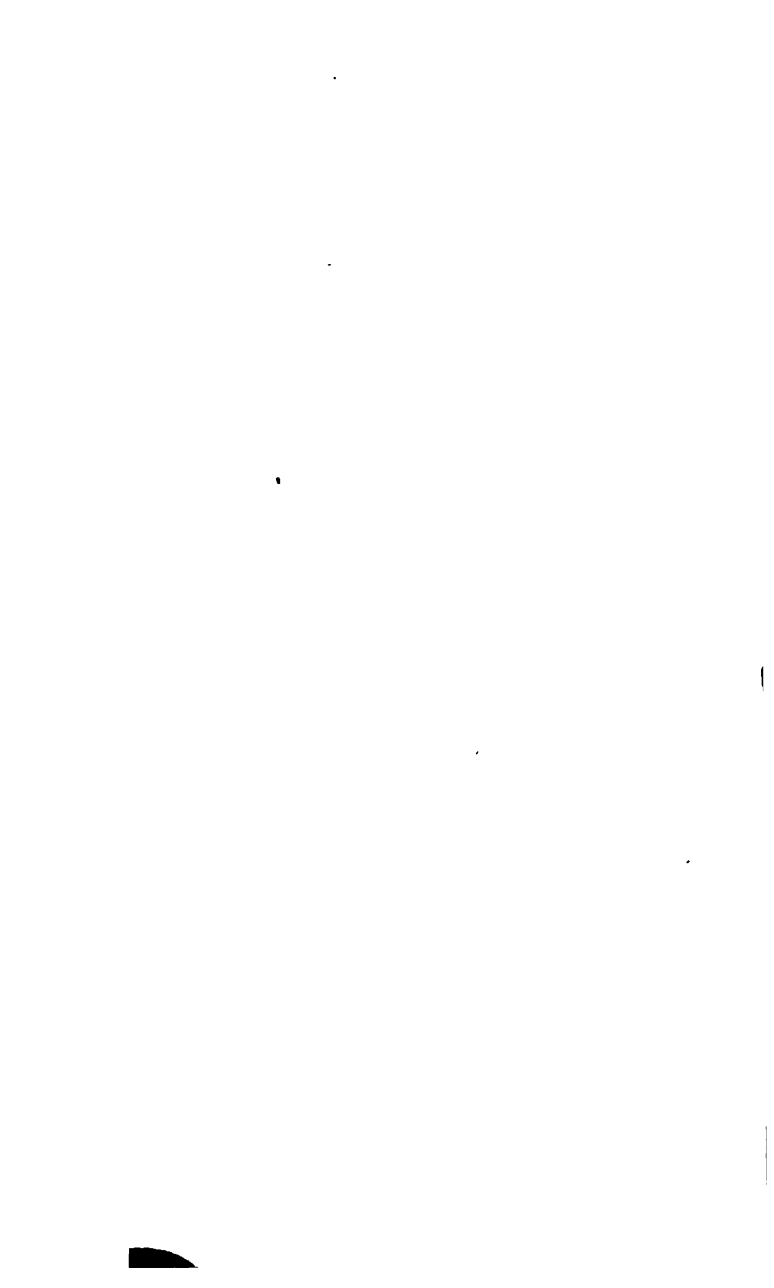
The leper raised not the gold from the dust :
“ Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door ;

That is no true alms which the hand can hold ;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
 Who gives from a sense of duty ;
But he who gives a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
 That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite, —
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before.”

THE VISION
OF
SIR LAUNFAL.



PART SECOND.



PRELUDE.



Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old ;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek ;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare ;
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof ;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams ;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars ;

He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight ;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze ;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew ;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf ;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
Which crystallised the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one :
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice ;
'T was as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each fitting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,

Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
With the lightsome green of ivy and holly ;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide ;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind ;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind ;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,

Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was — “ Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless !”

The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND.



I.

THERE was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly ;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
 For the frost's swift shuttles its shroud had spun ;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
 From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun ;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitley
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II.

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate ;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail ;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,
For it was just at the Christmas time ;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long ago ;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,

As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV.

“ For Christ’s sweet sake, I beg an alms ” ; —
The happy camels may reach the spring,
But Sir Launfal sees naught save the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanchèd bone,
That cowered beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V.

And Sir Launfal said, — “ I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree ;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns, —
Thou also hast had the world’s buffets and scorns, —
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side :

Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me ;
Behold, through him, I give to thee ! ”

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he caged his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust ;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink ;
'T was a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'T was water out of a wooden bowl, —
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 't was red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place ;

The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate, —
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII.

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
Which mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon ;
And the voice that was calmer than silence said,
“ Lo, it is I, be not afraid !
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail ;
Behold, it is here, — this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now ;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree ;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need, —

Not that which we give, but what we share, —
For the gift without the giver is bare ;
Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three, —
Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me.”

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke, as from a swoond : —
“ The Grail in my castle here is found !
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
Let it be the spider’s banquet-hall ;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail.”

X.

The castle-gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough ;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer’s long siege at last is o’er ;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise ;

There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round ;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command ;
And there 's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

NOTE.

ACCORDING to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the last supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to any thing so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the date of King Arthur's reign.

ODE TO FRANCE.

FEBRUARY, 1948.

I.

As, flake by flake, the beetling avalanches
 Build up their imminent crags of noiseless snow,
 Till some chance thrill the loosened ruin launches
 And the blind havoc leaps unwarned below,
 So grew and gathered through the silent years
 The madness of a People, wrong by wrong.
 There seemed no strength in the dumb toiler's tears, —
 No strength in suffering ; — but the Past was strong :
 The brute despair of trampled centuries
 Leaped up with one hoarse yell and snapped its bands,
 Groped for its right with horny, callous hands,
 And stared around for God with bloodshot eyes.
 What wonder if those palms were all too hard

For nice distinctions, — if that mænad throng —
They whose thick atmosphere no bard
Had shivered with the lightning of his song,
Brutes with the memories and desires of men,
Whose chronicles were writ, with iron pen,
In the crooked shoulder and the forehead low —
Set wrong to balance wrong,
And physicked woe with woe ?

II.

They did as they were taught ; not theirs the blame,
If men who scattered fire-brands reaped the flame :
They trampled Peace beneath their savage feet,
And by her golden tresses drew
Mercy along the pavement of the street.
O, Freedom ! Freedom ! is thy morning-dew
So gory red ? Alas, thy light had ne'er
Shone in upon the chaos of their lair !
They reared to thee such symbol as they knew,
And worshipped it with flame and blood, —
A Vengeance, axe in hand, that stood
Holding a tyrant's head up by the clotted hair.

III.

What wrongs the Oppressor suffered, these we know ;
These have found piteous voice in song and prose ;
But for the Oppressed, their darkness and their woe,
Their grinding centuries, — what Muse had those ?
Though hall and palace had nor eyes nor ears,
Hardening a people's heart to senseless stone,
Thou knewest them, O Earth, that drank their tears,
O Heaven, that heard their inarticulate moan !
They noted down their fetters, link by link ;
Coarse was the hand that scrawled, and red the ink ;
Rude was their score, as suits unlettered men, —
Notched with a headsman's axe upon a block :
What marvel if, when came the avenging shock,
'T was Ate, not Urania, held the pen ?

IV.

With eye averted and an anguished frown,
Loathingly glides the Muse through scenes of strife,
Where, like the heart of Vengeance up and down,
Throbs in its framework the blood-muffled knife ;
Slow are the steps of Freedom, but her feet
Turn never backward : hers no bloody glare ;

Her light is calm, and innocent, and sweet,
 And where it enters there is no despair :
 Not first on palace and cathedral-spire
 Quivers and gleams that unconsuming fire ;
 While these stand black against her morning skies,
 The peasant sees it leap from peak to peak
 Along his hills ; the craftsman's burning eyes
 Own with cool tears its influence mother-meeek ;
 It lights the poet's heart up like a star ;—
 Ah ! while the tyrant deemed it still afar,
 And twined with golden threads his futile snare,
 That swift, convicting glow all round him ran ;
 'T was close beside him there,
 Sunrise whose Memnon is the soul of man.

v.

O Broker-King, is this thy wisdom's fruit ?
 A dynasty plucked out as 't were a weed
 Grown rankly in a night, that leaves no seed !
 Could eighteen years strike down no deeper root ?
 But now thy vulture eye was turned on Spain, —
 A shout from Paris, and thy crown falls off,
 Thy race has ceased to reign,

And thou become a fugitive and scoff :

Slippery the feet that mount by stairs of gold,

And weakest of all fences one of steel ;—

Go and keep school again like him of old,

The Syracusan tyrant ;— thou mayst feel

Royal amid a birch-swayed commonweal !

VI.

Not long can he be ruler who allows

His time to run before him ; thou wast naught

Soon as the strip of gold about thy brows

Was no more emblem of the People's thought :

Vain were thy bayonets against the foe

Thou hadst to cope with ; thou didst wage

War not with Frenchmen merely ;— no,

Thy strife was with the Spirit of the Age,

The invisible Spirit whose first breath divine

Scattered thy frail endeavour,

And, like poor last year's leaves, whirled thee and
thine

Into the Dark for ever !

VII.

Is here no triumph ? Nay, what though
The yellow blood of Trade meanwhile should pour
Along its arteries a shrunken flow,
And the idle canvas droop around the shore ?

These do not make a state,

Nor keep it great ;

I think God made

The earth for man, not trade ;

And where each humblest human creature

Can stand, no more suspicious or afraid,

Erect and kingly in his right of nature,

To heaven and earth knit with harmonious ties,—

Where I behold the exultation

Of manhood glowing in those eyes

That had been dark for ages,

Or only lit with bestial loves and rages,—

There I behold a Nation :

The France which lies

Between the Pyrenees and Rhine

Is the least part of France ;

I see her rather in the soul whose shine
Burns through the craftsman's grimy countenance,
In the new energy divine
Of Toil's enfranchised glance.

VIII.

And if it be a dream, —
If the great Future be the little Past
'Neath a new mask, which drops and shows at last
The same weird, mocking face to balk and blast, —
Yet, Muse, a gladder measure suits the theme,
And the Tyrtæan harp
Loves notes more resolute and sharp,
Throbbing, as throbs the bosom, hot and fast :
Such visions are of morning,
Theirs is no vague forewarning,
The dreams which nations dream come true,
And shape the word anew ;
If this be a sleep,
Make it long, make it deep,
O Father, who sendest the harvests men reap !

While Labor so sleepeth
His sorrow is gone,
No longer he weepeth,
But smileth and steepeth
His thoughts in the dawn ;
He heareth Hope yonder
Rain, lark-like, her fancies,
His dreaming hands wander
'Mid heart's-ease and pansies ;
“ 'T is a dream ! 'T is a vision ! ”
Shrieks Mammon aghast ;
“ The day's broad derision
Will chase it at last ;
Ye are mad, ye have taken
A slumbering kraken
For firm land of the Past ! ”
Ah ! if he awaken,
God shield us all then,
If this dream rudely shaken
Shall cheat him agen !

IX.

Since first I heard our North-wind blow,
 Since first I saw Atlantic throw
 On our fierce rocks his thunderous snow,
 I loved thee, Freedom ; as a boy
 The rattle of thy shield at Marathon
 Did with a Grecian joy
 Through all my pulses run ;
 But I have learned to love thee now
 Without the helm upon thy gleaming brow,
 A maiden mild and undefiled
 Like her who bore the world's redeeming child ;
 And surely never did thy altars glance
 With purer fires than now in France ;
 While, in their bright white flashes,
 Wrong's shadow, backward cast,
 Waves cowering o'er the ashes
 Of the dead, blaspheming Past,
 O'er the shapes of fallen giants,
 His own unburied brood,
 Whose dead hands clench defiance
 At the overpowering Good :

And down the happy Future runs a flood
Of prophesying light ;
It shows an Earth no longer stained with blood,
Blossom and fruit where now we see the bud
Of Brotherhood and Right.

KOSSUTH.



A RACE of nobles may die out,
A royal line may leave no heir ;
Wise Nature sets no guards about
Her pewter plate and wooden ware.

But they fail not, the kinglier breed,
Who starry diadems attain ;
To dungeon, axe, and stake succeed
Heirs of the old heroic strain.

The zeal of Nature never cools,
Nor is she thwarted of her ends ;

When gapped and dulled her cheaper tools,
Then she a saint and prophet spends.

Land of the Magyars ! though it be
The tyrant may relink his chain,
Already thine the victory,
As the just Future measures gain.

Thou hast succeeded, thou hast won
The deathly travail's amplest worth ;
A nation's duty thou hast done,
Giving a hero to our earth.

And he, let come what will of woe,
Has saved the land he strove to save ;
No Cossack hordes, no traitor's blow,
Can quench the voice shall haunt his grave.

" I Kossuth am : O Future, thou
That clear'st the just and blott'st the vile,
O'er this small dust in reverence bow,
Remembering what I was erewhile.

“I was the chosen trump wherethrough
Our God sent forth awakening breath ;
Came chains ? Came death ? The strain He blew
Sounds on, outliving chains and death.”

TO LAMARTINE.



I DID not praise thee when the crowd,
 'Witched with the moment's inspiration,
Vexed thy still ether with hosannas loud,
 And stamped their dusty adoration ;
I but looked upward with the rest,
And, when they shouted Greatest, whispered Best.

They raised thee not, but rose to thee,
 Their fickle wreaths about thee flinging ;
So on some marble Phœbus the high sea
 Might leave his worthless sea-weed clinging,
But pious hands, with reverent care,
Make the pure limbs once more sublimely bare.

Now thou 'rt thy plain, grand self again,
 Thou art secure from panegyric, —
Thou who gav'st politics an epic strain,
 And actedst Freedom's noblest lyric ;
 This side the Blessed Isles, no tree
Grows green enough to make a wreath for thee.

Nor can blame cling to thee ; the snow
 From swinish foot-prints takes no staining,
But, leaving the gross soils of earth below,
 Its spirit mounts, the skies regaining,
 And unresenting falls again,
To beautify the world with dews and rain.

The highest duty to mere man vouchsafed
 Was laid on thee, — out of wild chaos,
When the roused popular ocean foamed and chafed,
 And vulture War from his Imaus
 Snuffed blood, to summon homely Peace,
And show that only order is release.

To carve thy fullest thought, what though
 Time was not granted ? Aye in history,

Like that Dawn's face which baffled Angelo,
Left shapeless, grander for its mystery,
Thy great Design shall stand, and day
Flood its blind front from Orients far away.

Who says thy day is o'er? Control,
My heart, that bitter first emotion;
While men shall reverence the steadfast soul,
The heart in silent self-devotion
Breaking, the mild, heroic mien,
Thou 'lt need no prop of marble, Lamartine.

If France reject thee, 't is not thine,
But her own, exile that she utters;
Ideal France, the deathless, the divine,
Will be where thy white pennon flutters,
As once the nobler Athens went
With Aristides into banishment.

No fitting metewand hath To-day
For measuring spirits of thy stature, —
Only the Future can reach up to lay
The laurel on that lofty nature, —

Bard, who with some diviner art
Hast touched the bard's true lyre, a nation's heart.

Swept by thy hand, the gladdened chords,
 Crashed now in discords fierce by others,
Gave forth one note beyond all skill of words,
 And chimed together, We are brothers.
O poem unsurpassed ! it ran
All round the world, unlocking man to man.

France is too poor to pay alone
 The service of that ample spirit ;
Paltry seem low dictatorship and throne,
 If balanced with thy simple merit.
They had to thee been rust and loss ;
Thy aim was higher, — thou hast climbed a Cross.

A PARABLE.



SAID Christ our Lord, "I will go and see
How the men, my brethren, believe in me."
He passed not again through the gate of birth,
But made himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and kings,
"Behold, now, the Giver of all good things ;
Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state
Him who alone is mighty and great."

With carpets of gold the ground they spread
Wherever the Son of Man should tread,
And in palace-chambers lofty and rare
They lodged him, and served him with kingly fare.

Great organs surged through arches dim
Their jubilant floods in praise of him,
And in church and palace, and judgment-hall,
He saw his image high over all.

But still, wherever his steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,
And from under the heavy foundation-stones,
The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church and palace, and judgment-hall,
He marked great fissures that rent the wall,
And opened wider and yet more wide
As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

“Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,
On the bodies and souls of living men?
And think ye that building shall endure,
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor?”

“With gates of silver and bars of gold,
Ye have fenced my sheep from their Father’s fold;

I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven, these eighteen hundred years."

" O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt,
We build but as our fathers built ;
Behold thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land.

" Our task is hard,— with sword and flame
To hold thy earth for ever the same,
And with sharp crooks of steel to keep
Still, as thou leftest them, thy sheep."

Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem,
For fear of defilement, " Lo, here," said he,
" The images ye have made of me !"

ODE

WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE
WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON.

My name is Water : I have sped
 Through strange, dark ways, untried before,
 By pure desire of friendship led,
 Cochituate's ambassador ;
 He sends four royal gifts by me :
 Long life, health, peace, and purity.

I 'm Ceres' cup-bearer ; I pour,
 For flowers and fruits and all their kin,
 Her crystal vintage, from of yore
 Stored in old Earth's selectest bin,
 Flora's Falernian ripe, since God
 The wine-press of the deluge trod,

In that far isle whence, iron-willed,
The New World's sires their bark unmoored,
The fairies' acorn-cups I filled
Upon the toadstool's silver board,
And, 'neath Herne's oak, for Shakspeare's sight,
Strewed moss and grass with diamonds bright.

No fairies in the Mayflower came,
And, lightsome as I sparkle here,
For Mother Bay-State, busy dame,
I've toiled and drudged this many a year,
Throbbed in her engines' iron veins,
Twirled myriad spindles for her gains.

I, too, can weave ; the warp I set
Through which the sun his shuttle throws,
And, bright as Noah saw it, yet
For you the arching rainbow glows,
A sight in Paradise denied
To unfallen Adam and his bride.

When Winter held me in his grip,
You seized and sent me o'er the wave,

Ungrateful ! in a prison-ship ;
But I forgive, not long a slave,
For, soon as summer south-winds blew,
Homeward I fled, disguised as dew.

For countless services I 'm fit,
Of use, of pleasure, and of gain,
But lightly from all bonds I flit,
Incapable as fire of stain ;
From mill and wash-tub I escape,
And take in heaven my proper shape.

So free myself, to-day, elate
I come from far o'er hill and mead,
And here, Cochituate's envoy, wait
To be your blithesome Ganymede,
And brim your cups with nectar true
That never will make slaves of you.

LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE GRAVES OF TWO ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD

BATTLE-GROUND.

THE same good blood that now refills
The dotard Orient's shrunken veins,
The same whose vigor westward thrills,
Bursting Nevada's silver chains,
Poured here upon the April grass,
Freckled with red the herbage new ;
On reeled the battle's trampling mass,
Back to the ash the bluebird flew.

Poured here in vain ; — that sturdy blood
Was meant to make the earth more green,
But in a higher, gentler mood
Than broke this April noon serene ;

Two graves are here ; to mark the place,
At head and foot, an unhewn stone,
O'er which the herald lichens trace
The blazon of oblivion.

These men were brave enough, and true
To the hired soldier's bull-dog creed ;
What brought them here they never knew,
They fought as suits the English breed ;
They came three thousand miles, and died,
To keep the Past upon its throne ;
Unheard, beyond the ocean tide,
Their English mother made her moan.

The turf that covers them no thrill
Sends up to fire the heart and brain ;
No stronger purpose nerves the will,
No hope renews its youth again :
From farm to farm the Concord glides,
And trails my fancy with its flow ;
O'erhead the balanced henhawk slides,
Twinned in the river's heaven below.

But go, whose Bay State bosom stirs,
Proud of thy birth and neighbour's right,
Where sleep the heroic villagers
Borne red and stiff from Concord fight ;
Thought Reuben, snatching down his gun,
Or Seth, as ebb'd the life away,
What earthquake rifts would shoot and run
World-wide from that short April fray ?

What then ? With heart and hand they wrought,
According to their village light ;
'T was for the Future that they fought,
Their rustic faith in what was right.
Upon earth's tragic stage they burst
Unsummoned, in the humble sock ;
Theirs the fifth act ; the curtain first
Rose long ago on Charles's block.

Their graves have voices ; if they threw
Dice charged with fates beyond their ken,
Yet to their instincts they were true,
And had the genius to be men.

Fine privilege of Freedom's host,
Of even foot-soldiers for the Right ! —
For centuries dead, ye are not lost,
Your graves send courage forth, and might.

TO ———.



WE, too, have autumns, when our leaves
 Drop loosely through the dampened air,
 When all our good seems bound in sheaves,
 And we stand reaped and bare.

Our seasons have no fixed returns,
 Without our will they come and go ;
 At noon our sudden summer burns,
 Ere sunset all is snow.

But each day brings less summer cheer,
 Crimps more our ineffectual spring,

And something earlier every year
Our singing birds take wing.

As less the olden glow abides,
And less the chillier heart aspires,
With drift-wood beached in past spring-tides
We light our sullen fires.

By the pinched rushlight's starving beam
We cower and strain our wasted sight,
To stitch youth's shroud up, seam by seam,
In the long arctic night.

It was not so — we once were young —
When Spring, to womanly Summer turning,
Her dewdrops on each grass-blade strung,
In the red sunrise burning.

We trusted then, aspired, believed
That earth could be remade to-morrow ; —
Ah, why be ever undeceived ?
Why give up faith for sorrow ?

O, thou whose days are yet all spring,
Trust, blighted once, is past retrieving ;
Experience is a dumb, dead thing ;
The victory 's in believing.

FREEDOM.



ARE we, then, wholly fallen? Can it be
That thou, North-wind, that from thy mountains bringest
Their spirit to our plains, and thou, blue sea,
Who on our rocks thy wreaths of freedom flingest,
As on an altar, — can it be that ye
Have wasted inspiration on dead ears,
Dulled with the too familiar clank of chains?
The people's heart is like a harp for years
Hung where some petrifying torrent rains
Its slow-incrusting spray: the stiffened chords
Faint and more faint make answer to the tears
That drip upon them: idle are all words;

Only a silver plectrum wakes the tone
Deep buried 'neath that ever-thickening stone.

We are not free : Freedom doth not consist
In musing with our faces toward the Past,
While petty cares, and crawling interests, twist
Their spider-threads about us, which at last
Grow strong as iron chains, to cramp and bind
In formal narrowness heart, soul, and mind.
Freedom is recreated year by year,
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,
In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling sphere,
In minds that sway the future like a tide.
No broadest creeds can hold her, and no codes ;
She chooses men for her august abodes,
Building them fair and fronting to the dawn ;
Yet, when we seek her, we but find a few
Light footprints, leading morn-ward through the dew ;
Before the day had risen, she was gone.

And we must follow : swiftly runs she on,
And, if our steps should slacken in despair,

Half turns her face, half smiles through golden hair,
For ever yielding, never wholly won :
That is not love which pauses in the race
Two close-linked names on fleeting sand to trace ;
Freedom gained yesterday is no more ours ;
Men gather but dry seeds of last year's flowers ;
Still there 's a charm ungranted, still a grace,
Still rosy Hope, the free, the unattained,
Makes us Possession's languid hand let fall ;
'T is but a fragment of ourselves is gained, —
The Future brings us more, but never all.

And, as the finder of some unknown realm,
Mounting a summit whence he thinks to see
On either side of him the imprisoning sea,
Beholds, above the clouds that overwhelm
The valley-land, peak after snowy peak
Stretch out of sight, each like a silver helm
Beneath its plume of smoke, sublime and bleak,
And what he thought an island finds to be
A continent to him first oped, — so we
Can from our height of Freedom look along

A boundless future, ours if we be strong ;
Or if we shrink, better remount our ships,
And, fleeing God's express design, trace back
The hero-freighted Mayflower's prophet-track
To Europe, entering her blood-red eclipse.

BIBLIOLATRES.



BOWING thyself in dust before a Book,
And thinking the great God is thine alone,
O rash iconoclast, thou wilt not brook
What gods the heathen carves in wood and stone,
As if the Shepherd who from outer cold
Leads all his shivering lambs to one sure fold
Were careful for the fashion of his crook.

There is no broken reed so poor and base,
No rush, the bending tilt of swamp-fly blue,
But he therewith the ravening wolf can chase,
And guide his flock to springs and pastures new ;

Through ways unlooked for and through many lands,
Far from the rich folds built with human hands,
The gracious footprints of his love I trace.

And what art thou, own brother of the clod,
That from his hand the crook wouldst snatch away,
And shake instead thy dry and sapless rod,
To scare the sheep out of the wholesome day ?
Yea, what art thou, blind, unconverted Jew,
That with thy idol-volume's covers two
Wouldst make a jail to coop the living God ?

Thou hear'st not well the mountain organ-tones
By prophet ears from Hor and Sinai caught,
Thinking the cisterns of those Hebrew brains
Drew dry the springs of the All-knower's thought,
Nor shall thy lips be touched with living fire,
Who blow'st old altar-coals with sole desire
To weld anew the spirit's broken chains.

God is not dumb, that he should speak no more ;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness

And find'st not Sinai, 't is thy soul is poor ;
There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends,
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone ;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.

BEAVER BROOK.



HUSHED with broad sunlight lies the hill,
And, minuting the long day's loss,
The cedar's shadow, slow and still,
Creeps o'er its dial of gray moss.

Warm noon brims full the valley's cup,
The aspen's leaves are scarce astir,
Only the little mill sends up
Its busy, never-ceasing burr.

Climbing the loose-piled wall that hems
The road along the mill-pond's brink,
From 'neath the arching barberry-stems,
My footstep scares the shy chewink.

Beneath a bony buttonwood
The mill's red door swings open wide ;
The whitened miller, dust-imbued,
Flits past the square of dark, inside.

No mountain torrent's strength is here ;
Sweet Beaver, child of forest still,
Heaps its small pitcher to the ear,
And gently waits the miller's will.

Swift slips Undine along the race
Unheard, and then, with flashing bound,
Floods the dull wheel with light and grace,
And, laughing, hunts the loath drudge round.

The miller dreams not at what cost
The quivering mill-stones hum a whirl,
Nor how, for every turn, are tost
Armfulls of diamond and of pearls.

But Summer cleared my happier eyes
With drops of some celestial juice,

To see how beauty underlies
For evermore each form of use.

And more : methought I saw that flood,
Which now so dull and darkling steals,
Thick, here and there, with human blood,
To turn the world's laborious wheels.

No more than doth the miller there,
Shut in our several cells, do we
Know with what waste of beauty rare
Moves every day's machinery.

Surely the wiser time shall come
When this fine overplus of might,
No longer sullen, slow, and dumb,
Shall leap to music and to light.

In that new childhood of the world
Life of itself shall dance and play,
Fresh blood through Time's shrunk veins be hurled,
And labor meet delight half-way.

TO JOHN G. PALFREY.



THERE are who triumph in a losing cause,
Who can put on defeat, as 't were a wreath
Unwithering in the adverse popular breath,
Safe from the blasting demagogue's applause ;
'T is they who stand for Freedom and God's laws.
And so stands Palfrey now, as Marvell stood,
Loyal to Truth dethroned, nor could be wooed
To trust the playful tiger's velvet paws :
And if the second Charles brought in decay
Of ancient virtue, if it well might wring
Souls that had broadened 'neath a nobler day,
To see a losel, marketable king

Fearfully watering with his realm's best blood

Cromwell's quenched bolts, that erst had cracked and
flamed,

Scaring, through all their depths of courtier mud,

Europe's crowned bloodsuckers,—how more ashamed
Ought we to be, who see Corruption's flood
Still rise o'er last year's mark, to mine away
Our brazen idols' feet of treacherous clay!

O utter degradation! Freedom turned

Slavery's vile bawd, to cozen and betray

To the old lecher's clutch a maiden prey,

If so a loathsome pander's fee be earned!

And we are silent,—we who daily tread

A soil sublime, at least, with heroes' graves!—

Beckon no more, shades of the noble dead!

Be dumb, ye heaven-touched lips of winds and waves!

Or hope to rouse some Coptic dullard, hid

Ages ago, wrapt stiffly, fold on fold,

With cerements close, to wither in the cold,

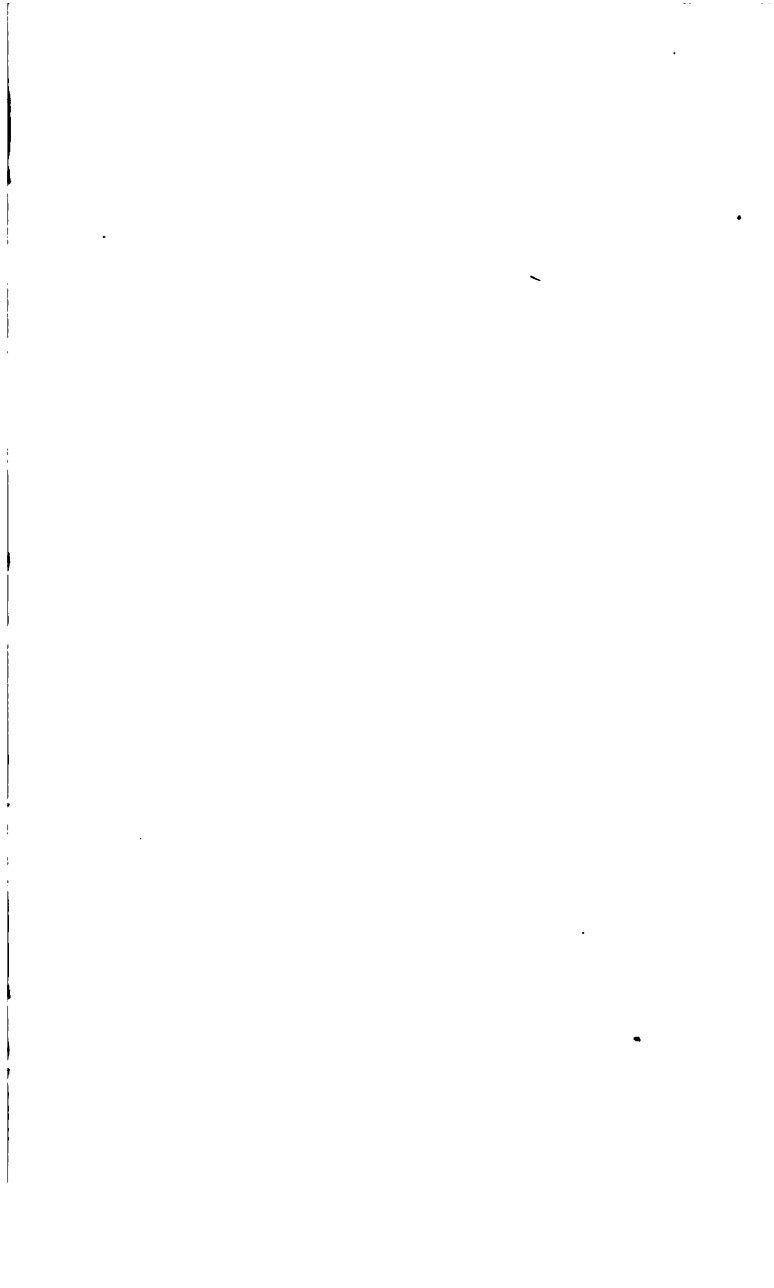
For ever hushed, and sunless pyramid!

Beauty and Truth, and all that these contain,
Drop not like ripened fruit about our feet ;
We climb to them through years of sweat and pain ;
Without long struggle, none did e'er attain
The downward look from Quiet's blissful seat :
Though present loss may be the hero's part,
Yet none can rob him of the victor heart
Whereby the broad-realmed future is subdued,
And Wrong, which now insults from triumph's car,
Sending her vulture hope to raven far,
Is made unwilling tributary of Good.

O Mother State, how quenched thy Sinai fires !
Is there none left of thy stanch Mayflower breed ?
No spark among the ashes of thy sires,
Of Virtue's altar-flame the kindling seed ?
Are these thy great men, these that cringe and creep,
And writhe through slimy ways to place and power ? —
How long, O Lord, before thy wrath shall reap
Our frail-stemmed summer prosperings in their flower ?
O for one hour of that undaunted stock,
That went with Vane and Sydney to the block !

O for a whiff of Naseby, that would sweep,
With its stern Puritan besom, all this chaff
From the Lord's threshing-floor ! Yet more than half
The victory is attained, when one or two,
Through the fool's laughter and the traitor's scorn,
Beside thy sepulchre can bide the morn,
Crucified Truth, when thou shalt rise anew !

THE END.



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SEP 25 1948

